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Rabin beats confidence motion

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A majority of Israeli deputies on Monday defeated a no-confidence motion by the opposition Likud bloc which is opposed to the Palestinian autonomy accord of Sept. 13. The 120-member Knesset rejected by 48 votes to 33 the motion supported by the National Religious Party and the ultra-nationalist Tzomet and Mokedet parties, parliamentary sources said, adding that three deputies abstained. The Likud has accused the government of Yitzhak Rabin giving the green light for the creation of a Palestinian police force in the occupied territories and of "encouraging terrorism" by making concessions to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Labour, the left-wing Meretz, the communist Hadash movement and the Arab Democratic Party voted down the censure motion, the 32nd since the elections in July 1992.

PLO: Israel stalling talks

CAIRO (Agencies) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel resumed peace talks Monday, but the chief Palestinian delegate accused Israel of stalling as a tactic to put pressure on Palestinians in the negotiations.

Nabil Shaath told reporters that Israeli negotiators did not seem committed to meeting a deadline of Dec. 13 for Israeli troops to begin pulling out of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho.

The date was set in the PLO-Israel accord signed in September, which calls for turning the two areas over to Palestinian control as a test for a full peace later between Palestinians and Israel.

Until now, however, Israel's concern over ensuring security — especially for Jewish settlers — has collided with the PLO's hope for a broad withdrawal to show Palestinians the talks have real meaning.

As the Dec. 13 deadline approaches, the negotiators seem to disagree both on details of the withdrawal and the urgency of beginning it on schedule.

"There are several Israeli attempts to ease off their commitment to implement the date... as a way to put pressure on the Palestinians," Dr. Shaath told reporters. He accused Israel of complicating the talks.

Dr. Shaath and other Palestinians say the deadline is important to prevent the peace talks from being overwhelmed by violence on the ground and to keep from holding up Israel's separate peace talks with Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.

In Israel, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Monday that his government is working towards the deadline, but added it was more important to come up with a good plan than to be tied to a specific date.

"First of all from our point of view, security is important," Mr. Rabin told a parliamentary committee. "Therefore, it is preferable to reach a clear agreement so that during implementation we will have as little misunderstandings as possible."

"I hope we will manage to keep to the deadline, but it would be better to delay implementation of the agreement of Sept. 13 for two or three weeks and avoid misunderstandings," he told the defence and foreign affairs committee.

"There are difficulties and differences of opinion with the Palestinians," Mr. Rabin said. "However, the negotiations are continuing in Cairo and El Arish and Paris."

Mr. Rabin said there was no question of Israel making any gestures.

"We have to reach agreements with our (negotiating) partners which will cover mainly the freeing of prisoners."

"On the other hand we want to obtain information about our three missing soldiers from the battle of Sultan Yaacub (Lebanon in 1982) and the other (missing soldiers)," Mr. Rabin said in a speech broadcast by radio.

In Copenhagen, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat insisted that the Dec. 13 date for Israel to start withdrawing troops from the Gaza Strip and Jericho was sacred and must be respected.

Mr. Arafat, speaking at a news conference at the end of a Nordic aid-raising tour, said: "Rabin says it is not a sacred date. But it is a sacred date. They must respect it."

"There will be complete confusion if the date is not respected. The credibility of the Israeli government will be damaged. Everybody will ask: 'Are they serious or not?'" Mr. Arafat said. He refused to elaborate on the consequences.

Mr. Arafat also urged the United Nations to help implement the autonomy deal and boost the chances for peace, in a message carried by the Palestinian news agency Wafa.

Mr. Arafat stressed the U.N.'s responsibility for the development and reconstruction of the occupied territories in the message, addressed to the U.N. committee on the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people (See page 3).

On Monday's Israel-PLO negotiations, sub-committees were working in Cairo and the Egyptian resort of El Arish on security issues and the turning over of day-to-day affairs to the Palestinians.

The meetings were expected to continue through the week, but neither Dr. Shaath nor chief Israeli negotiator Major General Amnon Shahak has yet joined the discussions.

Dr. Shaath said that Israel on Monday helped solve one main obstacle by presenting a plan to be negotiated for the release of its about 10,000 Palestinian prisoners.



Lower House Speaker Taher Al Masri Monday presents to His Majesty King Hussein the House's reply to the Nov. 23 Speech from the Throne (Petra photo)

Parliament welcomes moves towards peace

King voices pride in democracy, urges interaction among all branches

AMMAN (J.T.) — Parliament on Sunday backed His Majesty King Hussein's efforts to make peace with Israel and pledged to live up to the expectations of the Jordanian people who elected them.

The backing was contained in a constitutionally mandated response to King Hussein's Speech from the Throne Tuesday at the opening session of the 12th Parliament.

"We highly appreciate Your Majesty's repeated calls for a just and comprehensive peace that cannot be achieved before the Palestinian land returns to its owners," said the Parliament statement presented to the King at a meeting Monday.

King Hussein Monday expressed satisfaction over the accomplishments of the Jordanian democratic march describing the process as a blessed tree that is growing and yielding fruit.

"The tree of democracy promises a bright future with the help of God and through our will and ability to overcome all challenges and difficulties in this critical and difficult stage in the Arab Nation's history," King Hussein said in an address to the speakers and members of the Senate and the Lower House of Parliament after hearing their replies to his Speech from the Throne.

The King, who hosted a lunch at the Raghadan Palace following the delivery by the speakers of Parliament of their

replies to the Speech from the Throne, noted that the "democratic march in Jordan represented the fruit of the work of all citizens who shouldered responsibilities and have clear vision and resolve to carry out their duty to serve the nation and the coming generations."

"In this country, the haven of Muhajireen and Ansar (migrants and supporters) of various origins, the land of the free Jordanians, we feel confident of our potentials and, with the help of God, are determined to make this country a model for the Arab Nation at large and a beacon giving light and hope for others in this world," King Hussein said.

The King praised the Jordanian people's response to his call to participate in the Nov. 8 elections — "a response of which one can feel proud and one that can bolster confidence in the inevitability of arriving at our goals and objectives."

He said the response manifested people's awareness and loyalty and said they placed higher national interest above all other considerations.

King Hussein congratulated the speakers and members of the two Houses on their election and urged them to cooperate with the judicial and executive branches of government with "absolute confidence and free of any selfishness and avoid negative aspects of the

previous stage."

He stressed that higher national interests should remain the main objectives of all actions taken by the three branches.

The King said that working with awareness and faithfulness to "construct an edifice that can withstand all storms remains the basis for this country, which deserves a better future in return for the big sacrifices it has offered and the responsibility it has shouldered."

"I am proud to be a Hashemite Arab Muslim affiliated to this Arab country, which I hope would serve as a torch illuminating our world with hope and continue the struggle against challenges and hardships to attain its goals," King Hussein said.

He said he wanted to have more meetings with the two Houses so that they would be informed of the events and shoulder their responsibilities.

The lunch was attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali, Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, the King's advisors and Prince Talal Ben Mohammad, the King's military secretary.

Earlier, King Hussein met formally with the speakers and members of the two Houses and listened to the replies to

(Continued on page 10)

Fateh activists launch new armed struggle in Gaza

KHAN YUNIS, occupied Gaza Strip (Agencies) — Activists from Yasser Arafat's Fateh movement announced Monday they were resuming an "intensive" armed struggle in Gaza after Israel killed another of their number.

Fateh's armed wing, the Hawks, released a statement mobilising all fighters and declaring a "resumption of intensive military action" against Israeli targets.

Mr. Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) ordered a ceasefire following the signing of the Sept. 13 autonomy accord and his Hawks had observed it, but the Israelis have continued to pursue many of them and stepped up the manhunt at the weekend.

"We are announcing this because Israel has broken the agreement and as revenge for Ahmad Abu Rish," a masked militant told a press conference.

Abu Rish, one of about 30 Fateh men who turned himself in to the Israelis and was taken off the wanted list, was killed along with a bystander Sunday night.

He was the second Hawk member killed by Israel since the autonomy deal.

Two other fighters, who are wanted for killing a settler, came to his house in Khan Yunis refugee camp chased by Israeli undercover troops, Palestinian sources said.

The two managed to escape, but Abu Rish died in the shootout.

"Today we have already carried out three attacks against Israeli targets in Khan Yunis," the masked man said.

Palestinian sources reported that three Hawks attacked troops on the edge of the Khan Yunis military base. No injuries were reported in an exchange of fire, the first time Hawks had attacked soldiers since the autonomy deal.

"We will carry on with our armed attacks against Israeli soldiers until the occupation is finished in the Gaza Strip," the activist vowed.

Ten of the 50 armed Hawks

Hawks leader held

THE head of the Fateh Hawks was captured late Monday during a pitched battle with the Israeli army in the Gaza Strip's Rafah refugee camp, a Fateh official told AFP. Tayssir Salah Mansur Bordeineh, 24, who was wanted by authorities since March 1992, became the Fateh Hawks' leader after the release of Hisham Judah on Oct. 29. Three other members of the movement were arrested with Mr. Bordeineh, hours after the Hawks announced Monday they were resuming an "intensive" armed struggle in Gaza.

who have not been arrested attended the Khan Yunis press conference following the burial of Abu Rish at which thousands of Palestinians from all factions called for revenge.

The Hawks' announcement came as Israel and the PLO resumed talks in Egypt in a bid to reach agreement on implementation of the autonomy deal before a Dec. 13 deadline (see separate story).

In Gaza city, Fateh leaders distanced themselves from the call to arms.

"The Israelis are not committed to the agreement because they are still hunting and killing Palestinians," said Diab Al Loh, a member of Fateh's "high committee" on the Gaza Strip.

Mr. Loh described the killing as an "incident" and added that Fateh Hawks should still obey orders.

"They are part of Fateh and they are committed to the strategy for the peace process decided by the leadership in Tunis," he said.

Sufiyan Abu Zaydeh, another senior Fateh member, called on Israel to follow the agreement but said the Israelis had informed Fateh that the killing of Abu Rish was unintentional.

He added that Tunis would decide what to do about the escalation in the Gaza Strip.

Widespread clashes erupted between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers in Gaza's Rafah refugee camp Monday, Palestinians said.

At least one Palestinian was seriously wounded by gunshots in his chest, Palestinians said. Israel Television said three soldiers were lightly wounded.

Palestinian sources said residents of the camp from various political factions — supporters and opponents of the Israel-PLO peace accord — threw firebombs at Israeli soldiers who sought out wanted Palestinian activists.

Witnesses in the camp said they heard the noise of what they believed were anti-tank missiles. Palestinians said religious leaders called on mosque loudspeakers for residents to join the fighters against the army in the streets.

Palestinians marched through Khan Yunis carrying the body of Abu Rish wrapped in a Palestinian flag shouting "No peace with the enemy."

Soldiers who approached the cemetery came under a hail of stones and withdrew after opening fire and wounding one Palestinian, the army sealed off the town and camp where tensions ran high as youths burnt tyres and blocked roads.

Fateh and the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, whose military chief on the Gaza Strip was gunned down last Wednesday sparking violent clashes, both called a three-day protest strike in Khan Yunis.

The strike closed shops and business throughout the West Bank and Gaza City where soldiers shot and wounded two teenagers, correspondents said.

The death came after the arrest of 32 Fateh members or supporters in recent days, at least two of whom had already been taken off the list of wanted Palestinians, in the biggest crackdown on Fateh since the signing of the agreement. Most had been released by Monday, military sources said.

Twenty-six Palestinians have been killed by Israeli bullets

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Tripartite economic working group meets today in U.S.

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The second session of the joint Jordanian-American-Israeli working group opens in Washington today, with the main focus on an agreement on Jordanian supervision of the banking and monetary affairs of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Planning Ministry Under-Secretary Safwan Touqan and Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Deputy Governor Michel Marto are representing Jordan in the meeting, the second session of the tripartite working group which was set up in early October.

The group met in Paris in November on the fringes of a donors conference on Middle East peace. It was attended by Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Al Anani and Israeli Foreign Ministry Under-Secretary Uri Savir and chaired by U.S. Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross.

The Washington meeting, expected to be chaired by a senior U.S. State Department official, will look at various projects proposed at a bilateral level as well as at the multilateral level during the two-year-old Middle East peace process.

But prospects are not bright for any immediate materialisation of any project outside the context of the need to maintain the peace process, officials said.

"Jordan will be taking it easy on any venture which could be construed as a step towards normalisation of relations at this stage," said a senior official.

"True we have signed an

agenda for peace negotiations and have held meetings since then, but it does not mean that things have been worked out or that we are on the verge of joint projects in an atmosphere of normal relations," added the official, who preferred anonymity.

If anything, said the official, the Jordanian-Israeli track of negotiations on a peace agreement could prove more complex than all other tracks in the peace process because of the "very complexity of the issues involved."

"It is not at all relevant to suggest, as we have seen in some media reports, that the Jordanian-Israeli track of negotiations is the easiest," the official added.

To a large extent, the proposed agreement on Palestinian banking and monetary affairs in the interim five-year period envisaged under the Israeli-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is more complementary to the autonomy accord than a separate Jordanian-Israeli "deal," officials said.

The finalisation of the banking agreement, however, hinges on the ratification of a draft accord on economic relations between Jordan and the PLO since that document stipulates the Palestinian acceptance of Jordanian supervision of commercial banks and continued circulation of the Jordanian dinar in the occupied lands.

Despite expert advice, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat is holding out against endorsement of the draft agreement hoping to secure Israeli permission to set up his own central bank and currency, PLO sources said.

"The agreement has been with Mr. Arafat since early October," said one PLO source. "Nothing has been done about it although most Palestinian economic advisers have affirmed that any separation with Jordan in monetary and banking affairs at this point will not be in the interests of the Palestinians and Jordanians."

Yousef Sayegh, the Palestinian economist who led the Palestinian delegation to multilateral talks on regional economic cooperation and architect of a Palestinian economic development plan, said in a recent interview that "it will be catastrophic" for both the Palestinians and Jordan if the PLO set up a Palestinian central bank and issued a Palestinian currency.

During Israel-PLO economic talks in Paris this month, Palestinian negotiators pressed the Israelis for approval of a Palestinian central bank, but the Israelis did not budge, diplomats said.

"A central bank is a definite symbol of independence," said a European diplomat. "The Israelis understand Arafat's quest for a Palestinian central bank as a means to send a message to the Palestinians that independence is round the corner. But they are not willing to accept such a symbol."

Apart from the political symbolism, it is not simply practical for the Palestinians to have their own central bank and currency, economists say, noting that the Palestinians will not be able to provide a sound base for a currency and maintain the support needed to maintain its value.

Majali's quest for confidence vote based on Speech from Throne: Constitutionally correct, but democratically flawed

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali is "constitutionally correct" in adopting the Speech from the Throne as a government policy statement, but analysts believe that the premier's choice contravened the spirit of Jordan's quest for democracy.

Analysts and observers interviewed by the Jordan Times believe that Dr. Majali purposely chose in the House session Saturday to invoke the constitutional precedent of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker — who asked for confidence in his government based on a Speech from the Throne in 1991 — and ignored another precedent set by former Prime Minister Taher Masri — who chose to present his government for a confidence vote even though he was constitutionally not required to do so.

Dr. Majali Thursday asked for a vote of confidence from the Lower House of Parliament on the basis of the Speech from the Throne which the Majesty King Hussein delivered at the opening session of the 12th Parliament last Monday. The Constitution stipulates that the

government has to seek the confidence of the House within 30 days after Parliament convenes. Dr. Majali cited Article 54 of the Constitution to prove that he has the right to use the Speech from the Throne as his government policy statement.

Article 54-3 of the constitution states: "Every newly formed Council of Ministers shall, within one month of its formation, in cases where the Chamber of Deputies is in session, place before the Chamber of Deputies a statement of policy and request a vote of confidence on the basis of the statement. If the Chamber of Deputies is not in session at the time, or stands dissolved, the Speech from the Throne shall be considered to be a statement of policy for the purpose of this article."

Dr. Majali, in his debate with Parliament deputies over this issue, Saturday, said that according to the Constitution it is a "must" for the government to use the Speech from the Throne. Dr. Majali cited the example of Sharif Zeid, who in 1991 sought the opinion of the Higher Council for the Interpretation of the Constitution which ruled that he had to use the Speech from the Throne as a policy statement

because his government was formed while the House was in recess.

While Dr. Majali understanding of the Higher Council for the Interpretation is correct, officials within Sharif Zeid's government say that they viewed the council ruling as an option to use the speech but could have given a government statement had they felt a political need.

According to senior officials in Sharif Zeid's government the Constitution "helps a prime minister who is looking for the option of using the Speech from the Throne" but it is not binding.

Critics of Dr. Majali are not doubting the constitutionality of his decision, but say that his government's dissolving of the 11th Parliament and amending of the Election Law to a one-person, one-vote formula against the advice of most political parties, do not compare to Sharif Zeid's record.

Sharif Zeid government, unlike Majali's, analysts say, was praised for "conducting the 1989 elections in a fair and democratic manner."

They recall that Sharif Zeid's first government in 1989 had seen its role limited to overseeing the Kingdom's transition to democratisation, a mandate that most obser-

vers believe, it fulfilled to the letter and "with the highest sense of democracy."

Even more, the analysts say that Sharif Zeid's government — when it adopted the 1991 Speech from the Throne as its policy statement — was not lacking in parliamentary representation and included at least 10 deputies among its ranks.

A source close to Sharif Zeid government having decided to use the Speech from the Throne, that government made sure the text of the speech included the "future programmes" of the government in detail and not only past achievements.

Unlike Sharif Zeid, Dr. Majali is seen by his critics to be "hiding behind His Majesty's popularity to escape criticism about his government's practices."

"This is a government that dissolved Parliament, amended the Election Law to a controversial system, carried elections that were not hailed as the most democratic in the country's history and then decided to use the Speech from the Throne," one well-placed official said.

If Dr. Majali's commitment to democracy was to be measured against the steps taken by former Prime Minister Taher Masri, "then Dr.

Majali would have to answer to the House, democratically speaking if not constitutionally."

Mr. Masri, who now holds the post of speaker of the Lower House, asked for the confidence of the House during an extraordinary session when he was obliged by the Constitution to do so.

Mr. Masri presented the House with a government policy statement and obtained the House confidence. However, two months later 50 deputies signed a petition asking for his resignation, while the House was not in session. Mr. Masri resigned in the fall of 1991 before the House's ordinary session. One constitutional expert said that the original 1952 Constitution required prime ministers who oversee elections to resign after the results were announced.

"The 1952 constitution represents the democratic era of our political life and all amendments that were introduced after that year were introduced during an era of martial law era, a former official said.

If Dr. Majali was interested in the spirit rather than the letter of the Constitution, he should have taken this point into account, critics contend.

Tension rises in Algeria

ALGIERS (AFP) — Tension is mounting among Algeria's expatriate community as the Wednesday deadline given by Islamic fundamentalists for foreigners to leave the country approaches.

Most French and European families living here have already left the country while husbands and fathers have taken up residence in hotels under government protection, well informed sources said. They said of the 8,000 French nationals who moved to the country in recent years, a "good third" have left and others have moved into more secure neighbourhoods where they are less vulnerable to attacks.

Earlier this month the kidnappers of three French nationals who were later released gave foreigners one month to leave the country or face "sudden death."

The kidnappers said they belonged to the Armed Islamic Group (AIG) and their leader was identified as Abu Meriem. The group warned Algerian authorities that the "tyrant" would "pay dearly for his misdeeds." The warning apparently referred to a government crackdown against fundamentalists who have waged a rebellion since the army moved in to scrap the second round of general elections the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win in January 1992.

Although there have been no attacks against foreigners since the ultimatum was issued, foreign embassies here have taken the threat seriously and worry that the Wednesday deadline may bring renewed trouble.

Their concern has mounted as the AIG and the FIS have refused to negotiate with authorities who have hinted in recent days that they would be ready to meet representatives of the outlawed FIS to reach a settlement to the conflict.

In a communique dated Nov. 20 the AIG stressed that it was up to those fighting "in the trenches" to decide on the country's future and warned that Islamic leaders living in exile would suffer "the worst death" if they negotiated with the government.

Foreign diplomats here also fear that fundamentalists may retaliate in response to a Nov. 9 nationwide French government crackdown against suspected Algerian extremists.

Meanwhile, as the clock ticks towards Wednesday, security measures have been beefed up throughout the Algerian capital with foreigners restricting their outings and staying in close contact with each other.

Restaurants and nightclubs usually popular among foreigners have been deserted while the government and embassies have issued emergency phone numbers.

Economic independence toughens Syria

By Clarisse Lucas
Agence France Presse

DAMASCUS — Syria's tough stance in peace negotiations with Israel is partly due to its relative economic and financial independence from the West, according to Western diplomats here.

For many years a privileged Middle East partner of the former Soviet Union, Syria boasts a debt of only \$3.5 billion to international financial institutions and western states — half of Jordan's external debt.

Jordan, also involved in the peace talks with Israel, has a population about one-third the size of Syria's: Four million compared with 13 million.

Syria also owes the former Soviet Union \$12 billion, one Western economist said.

Since the 1991 Gulf war, Syria — which joined the U.S.-led coalition that ousted Iraq from Kuwait after a seven-month occupation — has received about \$1 billion from Western countries and some \$1.5 billion from pro-Western Arab states.

Western sources here said the amounts were, however, too small to put pressure on Damascus.

While the United States might try to link a settlement of Jordan's debt to progress in the Israeli-Jordanian negotiations, "Such pressures are more difficult with Syria," a Western economist said.

"The Jordanians want to reschedule their debt with the Paris Club (of western lending nations), like Egypt after the Gulf war, but they are being kept waiting," he said, adding that Syria had more room for manoeuvre.

Syria, moreover, is relatively healthy financially, and "strives to maintain its fierce independence at all levels," he said.

Syria has almost achieved self-sufficiency in food in the past few years, a rarity in the region.

Unlike the Israeli-Jordanian talks, negotiations between Israel and Syria within the framework of the Madrid peace conference in October 1991 have reached an impasse.

After doing its utmost to escape the international

Monetary Fund's grip, Damascus may still have to struggle with the payment of arrears on its debts.

Western countries acknowledge that Syria prefers to use its foreign currency reserves to develop its investments, rather than pay back its Western creditors.

In May 1991, Syria passed a law, known as law 10, to ease investment restrictions and offer both Syrians and foreigners maximum freedom, notably in the handling of foreign currency.

The legislation, aimed at invigorating many state-controlled industries and creating private sector projects and joint ventures, also exempts investors from paying import duties for the first five to seven years.

Peace ship scuttled off coast of Israel

ASHDOD (R) — Israeli peace activist Abie Nathan scuttled the MV Peace on Sunday, more than 20 years after he began using the 1940s vintage ship as a platform to call for an end to the Middle East conflict.

"It doesn't want to sink. Why does it take so long?" Mr. Nathan asked as he bobbed alongside the battered old ship in a smaller boat off the southern coast of Israel.

Mr. Nathan had closed the "Voice of Peace" radio station on Oct. 1 after the signing in September of the Israeli-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) accord.

His threat to scuttle the ship at that time was diverted by an offer from a few Israeli officials to work towards turning the ship into a museum on efforts to achieve Middle East peace.

Asked about the museum proposal on Sunday as he piloted the MV Peace out to sea one last time from the port of Ashdod, the flamboyant Nathan waved his hand dismissively and said: "They're worth nothing. They weren't serious."

Mr. Nathan brought the 570-tonne freighter around and his two-man crew opened valves allowing seawater to trickle into its hold at 11 a.m. when two final sea-telephone offers to buy the ship did not meet Mr. Nathan's conditions.

Mr. Nathan, who had served as a fighter pilot for British forces in World War II, said he was laying his peace ship to rest for lack of money as much as for the spark of peace now kindled in the Middle East. The crusty 66-year-old clamored off the MV Peace with its wheel and power control. The radio equipment had been removed weeks ago.

Seven hours later and well past nightfall the ship which had broadcast popular music and hopes for peace was still slowly settling into the sea. Mr. Nathan and a police boat stood watch.

Israel Radio said the Mediterranean claimed the MV Peace at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Nathan began a one-man campaign for Middle East peace in 1966 when he flew private chartered "Shalom (peace) One" to Egypt at the height of tensions between that country and Israel. Egypt and Israel signed a peace treaty in 1979.

In March 1973 Mr. Nathan anchored the freighter in international waters just outside Israel's jurisdiction and began running the "Voice of Peace."

Mr. Nathan was jailed three times by Israeli authorities for meeting PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat before the Jewish state lifted its ban against private citizens' contacts with the PLO in January of this year.

Egypt is still the only Arab state formally at peace with Israel.

Returning Britons say Turks persecuting Kurds

LONDON (Agencies) — Nine British trade unionists briefly detained in southeast Turkey returned home Sunday accusing the Turkish authorities of persecuting the region's Kurdish community.

The nine said they were held by military officials Friday with another British unionist, a French national and a Dane. The group had travelled to the Kurdish village of Birik to investigate reports that the military and police were torturing and murdering villagers.

"Immediately we got there we could see that the houses were still burning. There was just devastation," Sarah Dally of the health workers' union (Unison) told a news conference at London's Heathrow airport.

"We all got out and started taking photographs when a Kurdish woman started screaming 'go away, the soldiers will shoot you. You'll be murdered!'"

Ms. Dally said a group of soldiers surrounded them and

"marched us out of the village and into a field. We thought we were going to be shot."

The group was held overnight at an army station in a neighbouring village and the following morning they were driven to a police station in the provincial centre of Diyarbakir, she said. There they were interrogated before being allowed to contact their consulates.

Twenty-seven hours after they were first held they were given back their passports and told they could leave.

No one was immediately available at the Turkish embassy for comment.

Since 1984 the southeast has been the scene of intense fighting between government forces and guerrillas of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), which is fighting for self-rule in the region. Ten thousand people have died in the fighting.

The group had gone to Turkey to study the conflict.

Another member of the returning party, Brenda Nixon of

the National Union of Mine-workers, said the group has brought back evidence to prove their claims. "We have pictures and everything else to back it up."

Wiping away tears she said, "these people are under such stress and such pressure every day. They are followed and watched as we were. We managed to get out — we were ok — but they have to live with it every single day of their lives."

Turkey reports drug link

Turkish Interior Minister Nihat Metne said Sunday that security forces had scored major successes against Kurdish rebel drug-smuggling operations.

He said in a written statement that police had seized 1,054 kilograms of heroin, 2,884 kilograms of morphine base and 23,679 kilograms of hashish from PKK traffickers this year.

"This terrorist organisation gets financial revenues from

smuggling drugs abroad, as it does in Turkey," Mr. Metne said.

"Our government has been struggling to make Europe proclaim the PKK illegal since the establishment of the organisation."

Germany on Friday became the first European country to ban the PKK, following a crackdown on PKK militants in France.

Mr. Metne said security forces had killed 126 PKK guerrillas and captured 76 in southeast Turkey in the last 15 days.

In the latest violence, eight PKK fighters were killed in clashes Saturday in the Kulp region of Diyarbakir province and one was killed near Gence, in Bingol province, according to the emergency ruler governor's office in Diyarbakir.

More than 10,300 people have been killed in Turkey since the PKK began its armed struggle for an independent Kurdish state in the southeast in 1984.

Woman takes helm of Kuwait University

By William MacLean

REUTERS — The woman at the helm of Kuwait University wants to train her students to survive in a more difficult post-Gulf world.

Fayza Al Kharafi, the rector of Kuwait University, is the first woman in the Gulf and probably the entire Arab World to head a university. She is a firm believer in merit as the only criterion for advancement.

"What I would most like my graduates to be is independent, with a strong personality — people who truly learnt what they studied and did not just study to get a certificate," she said in an interview.

"Life is getting more and more difficult, and the most important thing is to learn properly, so one can survive in society, whether this be in Kuwait or outside."

Ms. Kharafi took over the emirate's only university in July following a distinguished

career as a professor of chemistry.

She wants to improve academic standards and make the youth of the wealthy, oil-exporting emirate increasingly self-reliant.

Kuwaitis say their ability to remodel their education system will be crucial to any attempt to diversify the economy away from almost total reliance on oil and on foreign workers.

Kuwait is placing a strong emphasis on the need for education and training following the Gulf war depletion of once-massive financial reserves and the expulsion or flight of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians seen as disloyal.

The absence of many of the people who ran the economy day-to-day has encouraged the idea that Kuwaitis must learn new skills and do such jobs themselves.

Students long virtually guaranteed a government job must now grapple with the idea

of competing on merit for employment.

Ms. Kharafi, in her 40s and wearing an Islamic headscarf (hejab), is the latest in a long line of women who have been appointed to senior positions in Kuwaiti society.

"Women are taking their places, good and high places, in society," Ms. Kharafi said. "But we should not look to the sex, male or female, but the qualifications. The person is a person, male or female."

Ms. Kharafi, educated at Egypt's Ein Shams University, said her priority was to improve teaching standards and practices.

Her next goal — to instill habits of independent thought and initiative among students used to traditional rote-learning — could not be achieved without a similar reform of the school system.

"Independent life needs a type of independent student," she said. "But this type of independent thinking should

start from the beginning and should exist when they leave primary school."

"Many of the students we receive want us to feed knowledge to them," Ms. Kharafi said.

"Instead, these students should learn an independent education by going to the libraries where they must depend on themselves and study for themselves."

"There is now a basic instinct in every Kuwaiti that they have to educate their children, that the primary investment is education," Rasha Al Sabah, the undersecretary of the Ministry for Higher Education, said in a separate interview.

The government backs a more practical approach to education. Minister of Education and Higher Education Ahmad Al Rubai last month complained of "trying down the minds of children with curricula that rely on memorising and repetition."

Ramallah vies with Jerusalem as Palestinian economic capital

By Helene Darce

Agence France Presse — RAMALLAH, occupied West Bank — The occupied West Bank town of Ramallah is starting to compete with Jerusalem as the economic capital for Palestinians keen to benefit from the outbreak of peace in the region.

Yaqub Abu Hadwan, owner of a car-rental agency, has decided to open a new showroom in Ramallah rather than expand his operation in Jerusalem, the traditional Palestinian economic hub.

Numerous Palestinian businessmen have made similar choices.

In a sign of the times, advertisements for new shops and businesses in Ramallah have started flooding the pages of East Jerusalem's two main dailies, Al Quds and Al Nahar.

The Ramallah boom began eight months ago when Israel sealed off the occupied territories, barring most West Bank Palestinians from entering East Jerusalem.

"Local taxes here are 40 per cent lower than in Jerusalem, where I would never have been able to buy such a large plot since there is no more space in Jerusalem," Mr. Hadwan said, showing off his brand new garage sheltering 50 cars.

"I barely have room to park 20 in Jerusalem," he added.

However, Mr. Hadwan has tents to explain that the Palestinians are not planning to pull out of Jerusalem. "It's impossible for Palestinians to forget Jerusalem, as it's our real capital."

Helmi Dalia, head of a factory making cardboard boxes which opened five weeks ago, said the sealing off of the territories pushed him into settling in Ramallah.

"Residents of the occupied West Bank cannot go to Jerusalem, but we can employ residents from East Jerusalem, who have no problem coming

here," he said.

Saadi Hassun, director of the Ramallah Chamber of Commerce, told AFP that in recent weeks several banks had started up and nine others had submitted requests for building permits.

Two insurance firms and four cement plants had also been established, while several shops were being built, he added.

Mr. Hassun said that compared with the period prior to Sept. 13, when the PLO-Israeli accord on limited autonomy for the Palestinians was signed, there had "definitely been an economic explosion."

although the chamber did not have exact figures because many companies had not registered with it.

However, many industrialists are still waiting to see if the political situation stabilises before they venture to invest, he explained.

Mr. Hassun said the town of Nablus further north had also seen certain industrial and commercial development, but it was less evident than in Ramallah, which benefited from its proximity to Jerusalem.

The influx of entrepreneurs has caused land prices to rocket in Ramallah, with 1,000 square

metres today costing \$800,000, according to a real estate agent.

Some 60,000 people live in Ramallah and the twin town of Al Bireh, but Ramallah also draws about 200,000 Palestinian workers each day from the surrounding areas.

According to Mussa Khamis, production supervisor at the Silvana chocolate factory, Mr. Ramallah also has the advantage of good weather.

"It's never too hot and that's why the founder, Antoine Garabai, decided to open his plant here 43 years ago," he said, referring to the oldest chocolate factory in the West Bank.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Somali refugees die in waters off Yemen

SANAA (AP) — Five Somalis jumped into the water and died after a dhow carrying 150 refugees fleeing war and hunger in their country was refused entry to Yemen. A spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees on Sunday confirmed the deaths which occurred Wednesday, but would not discuss the circumstances. The spokesman said the dhow docked later Wednesday at Sheikh Sayed, on the southwest coast of Yemen, where the rest of the refugees disembarked. Other sources told the Associated Press that the vessel was first refused entry at Aden, then at Djibouti, and again at Aden before finally being allowed to anchor at Sheikh Sayed. The five jumped off when the ship was off Aden the second time, hoping to swim ashore. UNHCR officials could not explain why this ship had been refused entry when in the past 18 months as many as 1,000 refugees were admitted into the country. Yemen is the only country on the Arabian Peninsula which has signed an agreement with the United Nations pledging to allow the refugees into the country. On arrival, they are placed in the care of UNHCR.

Mauritanian police grab gunman

NOUAKCHOTT (R) — Mauritanian police disarmed a gunman shouting "Allahu Akbar" at Independence Day celebrations shortly before Prime Minister Sidi Mohamed Ould Boubacar arrived, eyewitnesses said Sunday. State radio employees told Reuters a man in traditional robes armed at the radio building on Saturday evening where Mr. Ould Boubacar and other ministers were due to attend a five-day marking the 33rd anniversary of independence from France. "The man asked if the prime minister had arrived and when he was told no he went away. He came back later and police became suspicious," a radio staffer told Reuters. When police approached the man he gave the Islamic cry, drew a pistol from his gown and shot one lawman before two more overpowered him, eyewitnesses said, adding that police did not fire and the gunman was arrested unarmed. Mauritania is an Islamic republic but the government has fallen out with hardliners and recently expelled several Algerian fundamentalists studying at Nouakchott's Koranic school. Police said their wounded colleague was out of danger after surgery to remove a bullet. When Mr. Ould Boubacar arrived later the festivities continued as planned.

Rebels say Iran attacked their camp in Iraq

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian Revolutionary Guards attacked a camp in Iraq of the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq opposition group with mortars Sunday, wounding at least one Mujahedeen member, the opposition group said. Iraq-based Mujahedeen leader Massoud Rajavi, in a statement issued after the attack on the Ashraf camp 75 kilometres from the border with Iran, said that the group would respond inside Iranian territory. "The Revolutionary Guards crossed into Iraqi territory to launch this mortar attack," a Mujahedeen spokesman told Reuters by telephone. "One person was reported wounded." Iranian planes killed one Mujahedeen member and wounded a dozen in an attack on a camp inside Iraq in April 1992. A similar attack on Ashraf camp and a base nearer to the Iranian border on May 25 caused material damage only. One Mujahedeen member was killed and one wounded in Baghdad on Oct. 6 in an attack blamed by the group on Iran. There was no immediate comment from Tehran on the latest attack on Ashraf camp. The Mujahedeen spokesman said a mortar bearing Iranian markings was found near the scene of the latest incident.

Rabin urged to condition prisoner releases

TEL AVIV (AP) — Relatives of six missing soldiers joined by a right-wing leader called on the government Sunday to avoid releasing Palestinian prisoners until Israel received information about its lost men. Their news conference came amid mounting pressures from Palestinians for Israel to free thousands of prisoners as a condition for carrying out the Sept. 13 autonomy accord. "It is not out of any badness of heart that we are asking that the Palestinian prisoners not be released at this time," said Yona Baumel, father of Zachary Baumel, who disappeared during a 1982 tank battle in eastern Lebanon. "We want the Palestinian families along with our families to pressure the Palestinian leadership to release this information," of his son's whereabouts, Mr. Baumel said. Of its six missing soldiers, Israel is reasonably certain that one, air navigator Ron Arad, is alive and in Iranian hands. Arad was shot down during a 1986 bombing mission in Lebanon. Israel was informed two years ago during negotiations for the release of Western hostages held in Lebanon, that two other missing men, Yosef Fink and Rahamim Alsheikh, captured in 1986, had died. But their bodies were never recovered. The cases of the other three including Baumel, Yehuda Katz and Zvi Feldman, who disappeared 11 years ago, have been shrouded in mystery.

Israel to cut length of military service

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The army's Chief-of-Staff, General Ehud Barak, has proposed to cut the length of military service from three years down to 32 months, Israeli officials said. The reduction for men serving in the army could start from 1995. Gen. Barak told a cabinet meeting. A military source said meanwhile that service for women would be cut from 22 to 21 months as from January 1. The cuts are part of the army's modernisation plans and based on an assessment that the threat from Arab conventional arms has fallen, Israeli military commentator Zeev Schiff said on television.

Israeli daily Hadashot shuts down

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The left-wing Israeli tabloid newspaper Hadashot will close down on Tuesday for economic reasons, the publishers announced. Hadashot (meaning news in Hebrew), which strongly backed the Palestinian autonomy deal, was launched in 1982 but never made a profit from a circulation of about 30,000. Publisher Amos Shoken said some of the 50 journalists will be taken at his other daily, Haaretz, but most of the total 400 employees will be made redundant. The closure leaves nine daily newspapers in Israel, seven in Hebrew, one in English and one in Arabic. Two Palestinian dailies are published in East Jerusalem.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDER

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Le Monde Sous Marins
18:30 News in French
19:00 News in Arabic
19:15 Varieties
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 "Night Court"
21:10 Brand New Life
21:30 News in English
22:20 Feature Film: "Anna Karenina"

PRAYER TIMES

6:40 Fajr
6:52 (Summer) Duha
11:24 Dhur
14:12 Asr
16:36 Maghreb
17:57 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedish, Tel. 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 637785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terraced Church Tel: 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772361
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 625226
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624528
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 24 per cent, Aqaba 45 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Jamil Tarif 794710
Dr. Abbas Al Hakim 885446
Dr. Mukhlis Masmari 826425
Dr. Yousef Rashed 896301
First pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nairoba pharmacy 625672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nairoba pharmacy 625672
Najib pharmacy 847632

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Clouds will appear at different altitudes with temperatures rising slightly. There will be a chance of light showers and winds will be easterly moderate. In Aqaba, there will be partly cloudy, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman Min./Max. temp. 6/17

Aqaba 12/22
Deserts 3/18
Jordan Valley 10/21

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King confers medal on Awn Khasawneh

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Monday conferred Jordan's Independence Medal of the First Order on Ambassador Awn Al Khasawneh, the legal advisor of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan in appreciation of his services and distinguished performance at the national and international levels.

Elected a member of the U.N. Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in 1984, Mr. Khasawneh was elected three times to the commission and elected chairman of the commission last August.

He was appointed by the

Human Rights Commission as special rapporteur on forcible population transfer.

In 1986, Mr. Khasawneh was elected a member of the U.N. International Law Commission; he was re-elected in 1992. This is a prestigious commission of experts in international law charged with the codification and progressive development of international law.

This year, Mr. Khasawneh was elected chairman of the Commission on Culture by the Biannual General Conference of UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organisation) at its meeting in Paris last October.



Awn Al Khasawneh



YWMA CHARITY BAZAAR: Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Al Hassan Monday opens a charity bazaar at the Sports City organised by the Young Women's Muslim Association's (YWMA) Special Education Centre. The Princess viewed an array of products ranging from handicrafts, embroideries, knitwear and woodworks made by the centre's children. According to the centre's director, Kha-

dijeh Siraj, the proceeds of the bazaar will benefit the centre's activities. The Special Education Centre provides free vocational training to 160 men and women students suffering from mild mental disabilities and provides them with transportation, said Mrs. Siraj. Among those present at the opening ceremony was Minister of Social Development Mohammad Al Sogor and Mrs. Anne Joan Majali (Petra photo)

14-year-old boy is missing

Father suspects teacher involvement

By Rama Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Police and family members are looking for a 14-year-old boy missing since Monday Nov. 22 in what appears to be the first reported case of its kind in several months.

Ra'ed, the second son of Moudhi Hourani, a merchant who lives in Jabal Al Hashemi Al Shamali, left home and did not return Monday evening after a family argument, his father said.

The family notified all police stations and hospitals in Amman and also placed an advertisement in local newspapers with a photo of the boy.

"My son is very sensitive, but I did not think that he would leave the house for just an argument," Mr. Hourani told the Jordan Times.

Following the appearance of the advertisement in Sunday's newspaper, the family received several calls from individuals who claimed they had seen the youngster but did not indicate where or when, Mr. Hourani said.

The Troubled father said he suspected that his son's



Ra'ed M. Hourani

school, Kuteibah Ibn Muslim, and one of its teachers were responsible of his son's disappearance.

"One of the school's teachers knew I was a trader and convinced my son to sign a bill of credit worth JD 70, and in return my son would buy and sell merchandise for the teacher," the father said.

The father told the Jordan Times he believed his son is afraid to return home because someone might hurt him.

"I feel my son does not want to return home because he knows he is in trouble with

whomever he was dealing with, and he thinks I am angry at him," Mr. Hourani said.

He added that he had no knowledge of what his son could be involved in, or what he sold or bought, because the boy would not confess to it.

The father told the Jordan Times that he contacted school officials to complain about the teacher but they only voiced their displeasure at the incident.

Mr. Hourani said he was not going to complain to the Ministry of Education until his son was found and the boy can explain what really happened.

"It is a shame that a teacher who is supposed to direct students and educate them would take advantage of them because they are young," said Mr. Hourani.

A police official contacted by the Jordan Times at Al Hashemi Police Station confirmed the missing persons case.

"We received a complaint about a missing boy on Nov. 23," the official said. But he maintained that police received no complaint against a teacher.

Visiting Population Institute team studies Jordan's development policies

AMMAN (J.T.) — A delegation from the Washington-based Population Institute (PI) Monday met with Jordanian officials and experts to obtain more information about Jordan's population and development policies.

Former Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber briefed the 18-member delegation during a meeting organised by Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) on the political and economic situation in the Kingdom.

Tayseer Abdul Jaber, former head of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), spoke to the delegation about the population policy the Kingdom

has adopted, referring to the improved literacy and mortality rates that they have led to.

The delegation, which is on a 10-day "family planning study tour," ahead of the International Conference on Population and Development which will be held in Cairo next year, later visited the Noor Al Hussein Foundation and was briefed by its president, In'am Mufi, on the foundation's development projects and philosophy.

Mrs. Mufi told the delegation during a slide presentation of NHF's projects, that the foundation, established in 1985, seeks to introduce innovative and dynamic inte-

grated community development models in the areas of family and community development, women, children, culture and heritage.

The delegation, which also visited NHF's Trade and Design Centre, will meet with officials at the Population Studies Department and the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan before ending its visit on Dec. 3.

PI President Werner Fornas said the delegation chose Jordan for its family planning tour because of the country's "enlightened" population and development policies "which could be copied by other countries in the region."

Higher Council of Arab Chemists Federation, which will be held in Amman Wednesday.

Participants will discuss publishing of a unified glossary of chemical terms, the issuance of a special chemical directory, and means of developing the chemistry curricula in the Arab World.

Taking part in the meetings will be representatives of Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, Bahrain, Iraq, Palestine and Jordan.

Arab chemists to meet in Amman

Jordan will also take part in the three-day meeting of the

Jordan to attend 10-day symposium

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will take part in a 10-day symposium on public spending and social policies starting in Cairo today (Tuesday).

The symposium will discuss means of alleviating the impact of poverty, rationing public spending, bridging social gaps and alleviating consequences resulting from the application of the economic adjustment programme.

Also taking part in the symposium will be representatives

Kingdom reaffirms stand on PLO-Israel accord on day of solidarity with Palestinian people

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Al Anani Monday reaffirmed Jordan's position vis-a-vis the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)-Israel agreement, but cautioned that political, social, economic and psychological difficulties necessitate the utmost level of coordination in order to be overcome.

At a meeting held at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC), at which a message from the Palestinian President Yasser Arafat was read, Dr. Anani pointed to the important role Jordan can play to achieve peace, because of the "special relationship between the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples."

He said at the conference, organised by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, that Jordan's role is not solely official, it also includes the participation of private Jordanian corporations which will play a fundamental part in construction, investment, industry and funding in the Palestinian entity.

"The binding relationship

between the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples makes us look at the peace process as a joint march between Jordanian institutions and Palestinian institutions ... and joint Palestinian-Jordanian institutions ..."

Dr. Anani said. The minister, however, pointed out that the declaration of principles signed on Sept. 13 did not offer solutions to all disputable issues, especially concerning Jerusalem.

"While we here in Jordan offer full support for our Palestinian brethren in their efforts to build up the West Bank and Gaza Strip and establish the Palestinian entity that is reflective of the Palestinian identity, we also attribute an unlimited importance to Jerusalem and we look to Jerusalem as the city of peace that is open for (people) of all religions and administered by religious tolerance," Dr. Anani said.

In the message sent by the Palestinian president and read by ESCWA Task Force Head Sami Sunna, Mr. Arafat stressed that the success of the PLO-Israel agreement depends first "on the intention and care of both parties to implement its articles faithfully ... and also on the will of the international community to provide the necessary and needed support for its suc-



Left to right, Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Al Anani, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) Executive Secretary Sabah Bakjaji, and Palestinian Ambassador to

Jordan Al Tayeb Abdul Rahim attend a meeting to mark the international day of solidarity with the Palestinian people (Petra photo)

cess."

Mr. Arafat called on the international community to offer political, economic and moral assistance. "We express our thanks to the donor countries which have pledged us \$2.2 billion in aid ... (but the needs required) greater amounts than what has been pledged, exceeding \$12 billion until the end of the century," he said.

"We want to build a modern and open society based on justice, social cooperation and free economics; a society founded on democracy, political pluralism and participation

by all social forces of our people... a society based on good neighbourliness, and tolerance and love in conformity with the history, culture, civilisation and tradition of our people in their land, Palestine," added Mr. Arafat.

ESCWA Executive Secretary Sabah Bakjaji expressed in his opening speech "ESCWA's readiness to provide all the services it can to the Palestinian people and their grassroots and official institutions under autonomous rule, in compliance with its mandate to strengthen cooperation among the countries of the region and

to support regional economic and social development, as stipulated by the Economic and Social Council."

Dr. Bakjaji pledged that "ESCWA will spare no effort in providing technical assistance for economic and social development in Palestine and for the Palestinians."

"I hope this day will be the last of its kind and that it will become instead the day of assessing cooperation with the Palestinian people, for their development, progress and welfare under an independent administration," he said hopefully.

UNDP to help in applying government's decentralisation policy

AMMAN (J.T.) — Interior Minister Salameh Hammad Monday discussed with the resident representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Othman Hashem, cooperation in the application of the decentralisation policy in Jordan's governorates.

Mr. Hashem said the UNDP was committed to providing assistance to Jordan in this regard by applying the policy in one of the governorates as a first step.

In his meetings over the past two months, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali has been advocating the decentralisation programme, noting that it would reduce pressure on the central government in Amman and save the citizens time and effort.

Upon unveiling the Kingdom's 1994 fiscal budget Saturday, Finance Minister Sami Gammoh said that the budget envisaged allocations on a governorate-by-governorate basis

in order to advance the government's policy of decentralisation.

According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, the UNDP is expected to send a team of three decentralisation specialists to tour Jordanian governorates and discuss with local officials prospects of applying the policy and its legal, administrative and financial dimensions.

The tour will be followed by further discussions on the part of the UNDP team with the central government, in order to define areas where the UNDP can offer assistance, according to Petra.

Minister Hammad was quoted by Petra as saying that Jordan will be ready to cooperate with the UNDP in matters related to parliamentary elections around the world and in conformity with a U.N.-sponsored programme related to elections, as well as in the field of local government.



Minister of Interior Salameh Hammad (right) Monday discusses cooperation in applying the government's decentralisation

policy with United Nations Development Programme Resident Representative Othman Hashem (Petra photo)

Minister voices Jordan's commitment to goals of International Social Security Association

AMMAN (Petra) — Labour Minister Khaled Al Ghzawi Monday said that Jordan was totally committed to the principles and goals of the International Social Security Association (ISSA) which aims to promote various types of services to all members of society.

In line with these principles, Jordan believes that there can be no freedom without justice and no justice without social security, said the minister in an opening address to the 13th regional training course on social security in Asia and the Pacific.

He said Jordan was committed to political pluralism and freedom, which are essential tools in ensuring justice and social security.

Voicing the Kingdom's call for further cooperation at the pan-Arab, regional and international levels, the minister said Jordan has enacted and applied laws in the fields of education, health and social security resulting in a population where one-third of the citizens are students, and hospitals and medical services are

vastly upgraded and rivaling standards of some advanced nations.

In addition, great strides have been made in the area of social security, providing protection and welfare to the country's workforce, said Mr. Ghzawi.

Mohammad Saleh Al Hourani, the Social Security Corporation (SSC) Director General also addressed the session and outlined the corporation's services to Jordanian citizens and its development since its inception in 1980.

Jordanians and foreign nationals are treated equally by the Social Security Corporation Law, Mr. Hourani explained, adding that non-Jordanians covered by the SSC now range between 20 to 32 per cent of the 100,000 individuals under the SSC umbrella.

He said tens of thousands of non-Jordanian workers benefiting from SSC coverage include nationals of Egypt, Syria, Korea, Finland, India, China, Sri Lanka, in addition



Minister of Labour Khaled Al Ghzawi (centre) Monday attends the opening ses-

sion of the 13th regional training course on social security in Asia and Pacific

to fewer individuals from Europe, Africa and the Americas.

Organised by the ISSA regional office for Asia and the Pacific, in cooperation with the SSC, the 12-day meeting is expected to discuss topics related to the concept, principles and goals of social security as well as social security funding.

investments and management.

Delegates from India, Indonesia, Iran, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, the Philippines, Bahrain and Jordan taking part in the meeting will each submit a working paper outlining their respective countries' experiences in social security applications.

Specialists from Jordan, Au-

stralia and ISSA will deliver lectures at the meeting.

Heads of diplomatic missions were among the guests attending the opening session of the meeting held at the Amman Chamber of Industry.

Representatives of labour unions, trade and industry chambers and researchers are attending the sessions.

15 Sudanese engineers start seminar at VTC institute

AMMAN (Petra) — A group of 15 Sudanese engineers involved in vocational training programmes in their country Sunday began a 10-day training seminar in Jordan, organised for them by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in cooperation with the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC).

The engineers are vocational training supervisors and instructors themselves. According to Samih Jaber, director of the VTC Instructors Training Institute, the Sudanese engineers will receive theoretical and practical training related to integrated training programmes, evaluation of such programmes and appreciating trainees performances.

The Sudanese participants will also be expected to design vocational training program-

mes and design workshops; their training will take place at several VTC centres in Jordan, according to Mr. Jaber.

He said the training seminar was proposed by the UNDP in coordination with the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Noting that the institute was established in 1982 in order to provide training to Jordanians, Mr. Jaber said that arrangements were made later to absorb instructors from other Arab states.

He said that instructors from Bahrain, Yemen and Morocco benefited from the institute's programmes.

So far, Mr. Jaber added, the institute has provided training to 3,000 instructors and supervisors representing 44 firms from Jordan and other Arab countries.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition entitled "Palestine Throughout History" at the University of Jordan.
- ★ Exhibition of handicrafts at the University of Amman.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Farghali Abdel Hafez at the Balka Art Gallery in Al Fuheis (10:00 a.m.- 8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 720902).
- ★ Exhibition of ceramics by Iraqi artist Seham Saoudi at Alla Art Gallery (9:00-13:30 and 15:00-18:00) (Tel. 639303).
- ★ Photographic exhibition on the intifada at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation (8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.).
- ★ Exhibition of pottery by Hazim Al Zu'bi at the Jordan Crafts Centre (Al Aydi) — Jabal Amman, Second Circle (9:00-13:00 and 15:00-18:00).

- ★ Exhibition of lithographs by a number of artists at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Hammoud Shantout at Baladna Art Gallery (Gardens Street).
- ★ Art exhibition by Iraqi artist Rakan Daboudh at Orfali Art Gallery (Tel. 826932).
- ★ Exhibition of recent paintings by artist Ammar Khammash at Darat Al Funn of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Lweibdeh. Also showing, the permanent exhibition (Saturday-Thursday 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.).

CHARITY BAZAAR

- ★ Charity bazaar by the Young Women's Muslim Association (YWMA) at the Sports City in Amman.

POETRY RECITAL

- ★ Poetry recital by physician-poets Dr. Sura Sub'ul 'Ash, Dr. Ibrahim Al Khatib, and Dr. Omar Haidar at the Arab Club for Culture and Art at 7:00 p.m.

Jordan Times

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The significance of Dec. 13

THE PALESTINE Liberation Organisation (PLO)-Israel accord, signed at the White House last September, appears to be on the brink of unravelling over Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin government's new stance that the date set for the implementation of the deal is not so "sacred," Israeli Health Minister Chaim Ramon went as far as saying that the Dec. 13 deadline is nowhere found in the Ten Commandments, in an effort to belittle the dispute.

The two basic issues that still divide the PLO and Israel are the size of the Jericho territory that Israeli soldiers must withdraw from and control over border crossings with Jordan and Egypt. For the Palestinians, the date for enforcing the Gaza-Jericho First agreement is extremely critical. It was no easy task for the PLO leadership to sell the deal to its people in the first place. The organisation has also encountered violent opposition from various Palestinian factions because it has signed the deal.

If Mr. Rabin reneges on this modest pact with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, the antagonists of the peace process would appear to be vindicated and their hands strengthened among the Palestinian constituencies, including those who chose to give the accord the benefit of the doubt. Now the groups that fought and are still fighting the Sept. 13 accord have all the justification to tell their opponents "I told you so."

Symbolically, the deadline for putting in place the Palestinian-Israeli agreement on interim self-rule for the Palestinians in Gaza and Jericho is not just a date on the calendar. It is a litmus test of Israeli seriousness to withdraw from even a few kilometres of Palestinian territory and give the moderate Palestinians a glimmer of hope about the prospects for peace in the Middle East. If the Israeli side keeps on insisting that the agreed upon Declaration of Principles with the PLO means only the redeployment of Israeli armed forces around Jericho and Gaza at a time when the wording of the initial accord specifically calls for withdrawal, any agreement with Tel Aviv within the framework of the Declaration of Principles is not worth the paper on which it is written.

This whole exercise between the PLO and the Rabin government also brings into question the significance of any undetailed deal with the Israelis. One wonders why the extent of Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area was not spelled out in the first place. Surely it must have crossed the minds of the two parties that such a significant piece of "detail" goes into the heart of the matter, and leaving it out hanging in thin air is an irresponsible negotiating tactic. This episode also vindicates the Syrian concerns about the ultimate Israeli intentions. Damascus insists that even an initial or interim peace agreement must be iron-clad in details to avoid the pitfalls of the Gaza-Jericho first deal. Henceforth, all the Arab parties should aim to pin down their Israeli counterparts on every single detail.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL DUSTOUR daily said Monday that the military mentality is still dominating the mind of General Rabin, who heads in Israel a government bent on perpetuating occupation of Arab land. Mr. Rabin is dealing with political matters with a military thinking and is bent on depriving the Palestinians of their legitimate rights, despite the deal with the PLO signed on Sept. 13, said the paper. Mr. Rabin has recently manifested an adamant position regarding the redeployment of Israeli forces in Gaza and Jericho and his sending of troops to quell the resistance in the two areas, in total defiance of the Palestinian people's feelings and national aspirations, it added. Observers believe that by so doing, Mr. Rabin is trying to distort the PLO-Israeli deal so as to go back on Israel's commitments to withdraw forces from the two areas as a first step towards granting the Palestinians autonomy rule, the paper continued. Mr. Rabin gave this impression to the world in his announcement that the implementation of the Gaza-Jericho first option would be delayed for sometime, according to the paper. It said that by so doing, Mr. Rabin has given the world another impression that whatever Israel agrees upon with the Arabs could also be subject to delay and procrastination and that Israel respects no deals and does not honour any commitments.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily expressed apprehension of the peace formula which is being vehiculated in the Arab World by the U.S.-Israeli alliance. Fahd Al Fanek said that we had assumed that peace would be accompanied by a degree of economic progress that would palliate the bitterness accompanying the compromise with Israel. Contrary to expectations, the real estate and the financial and commercial markets are slowing down, obviously as a result of the accelerating peace process, especially following reports about a PLO-Israeli deal, the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli common agenda and the formation of a tripartite Jordanian-Israeli-American Economic Committee, the writer said. Jordanian officials, he said, are puzzled to find that instead of the promised "economic progress," the Kingdom is facing economic recession, which the prime minister has interpreted the phenomenon as being the result of a state of wait-and-see situation following the political developments and the deals signed in the past few months with Israel. The writer said that Jordanians are now apprehensive of the negative impact of the deals signed with Israel as people are already witnessing the adverse consequences affecting their economy.

The View from Fourth Circle

Parliament, confidence and the Karak resthouse lunch menu

By Rami G. Khouri

The controversy about whether or not Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali should, can or must ask Parliament for a vote of confidence on the basis of His Majesty King Hussein's Speech from the Throne is a legal and constitutional technicality that is pregnant with political implications. Technically, the prime minister is right, as technically he always is, because he is a technical man of great experience and considerable professional depth. According to the Constitution and its recent interpretation, the King's speech can be considered by Parliament as the government's policy statement. But this is not the real issue and both the prime minister and his opponents know it.

The real issue is that some members of Parliament and many other people in the public at large are critical of the government's political conduct. The parliamentary vote of confidence is an opportunity for those people to engage in political and intellectual battle with Prime Minister Majali and his government. This is difficult if not impossible to do if the terms of reference of the contest are King Hussein's speech, for three important reasons:

- it would be seen inappropriately impolite to challenge or to oppose policies that have been personally articulated by King Hussein, in view of the King's personal popularity and his official position above the fray of daily politics;
- the speech from the throne is a very broad review of principles that drive government policy, rather than a detailed set of programmes that will be implemented;
- the vote of confidence from the Parliament is not only about broad policy guidelines that the government will follow, but also about its democratic impulses and its behaviour, whether now, in recent months, or in the near future.

The prime minister and his supporters are following the letter of the law by submitting the King's speech as their policy programme; but they are doing damage to the spirit of the times and to the whole concept of democracy that is enshrined in the Constitution and the National Charter.

The prime minister is in a very delicate position. He should find a way to reconcile, on the one hand, his clear constitutional right to hide behind the King's speech with, on the other hand, his obligations as an educated and enlightened Jordanian and a political personality to continue Jordan's impressive but inconsistent drive for genuine democracy and pluralism.

Dr. Majali is a political personality chosen for his important position by the King, but he has not been elected by the people or ratified by their representatives. He emanates from a political culture and a historical era that are noteworthy for many fine attributes, but not particularly for the vibrancy of their formal democratic practices or their politically pluralistic inclinations. His own government's behaviour has raised valid questions about the elections, the state's information policy, conduct of the peace talks, and other sensitive fields that reflect on the nature, direction, and seriousness of our democratisation. It is important for him personally and for the political progress of Jordan that these questions be dealt with in a politically credible manner — i.e., in a parliamentary debate based on his government's visions and plans, rather than only on the King's speech.

Therefore, the prime minister stands before a historic opportunity that is both personal and national in its dimensions. He can make the personal transition from a political personality to a genuine political leader, and he can strike a powerful blow for the credibility of Jordan's political transformation to a system of democratic pluralism. He could do this, for example, by proclaiming that he will submit the King's speech as his government's policy programme — but he will add to it an annex detailing the government's policies in more specific terms, and explaining in greater depth some of the decisions that his government has recently taken and may plan to take in the future.

We all know that his government will win a vote of confidence, even if it submits the lunch menu from the Karak resthouse as its policy programme. The incumbency of this prime minister and his government are not in jeopardy. Dr. Majali is not personally the issue here; the issue is the quality of our political values and the credibility of our political system.

It would be an act of great personal courage, national magnanimity, and political astuteness for Dr. Majali to submit his government to the sort of political debate that would result if he provided a policy statement other than, or alongside, the King's Speech from the Throne. He has nothing to lose, and

both he and the country have much to gain, by such a daring and grand political act. He would be remembered as the prime minister who strengthened Jordanian democratic pluralism and the parliamentary dimension of its constitutional monarchy.

The law and the constitution tell him that he can submit only the King's speech; his democratic sentiments should tell him that this is not enough. Also, the constitution does not forbid him from adding to and supplementing the King's speech. The constitution is a minimalist document, designed to outline the case of a government that was appointed when Parliament was not in session. To stick to the strict letter of the Constitution at a moment like this is an act of legal decorum, but also of excessive political caution and needless national listlessness. This is a moment that invites vision, passion, and deeds that transform ordinary men into genuine leaders.

Dr. Majali and his colleagues should ponder these points because they are entrusted with something far greater than their own political fate or personal sensitivities. The essential point of democratic pluralism is that official policies are formulated through a perpetual process of political give-and-take, whose main components are votes, public opinion, ideas, and strength of personality. The prime minister has been charged by the King with promoting democratic pluralism, and this should be his single greatest concern in the political arena. Dr. Majali today is obeying the law, but perhaps also evading the pluralistic spirit of the day.

Dr. Majali stands before a rare opportunity to strike a blow for the forces of light, to give Jordanian democratisation a timely boost, and to earn the sort of popular credibility and political respect that can only be earned in the mudpit of parliamentary debate and the mechanisms of democratic pluralism. What is he afraid of? Why does he choose to hide behind the King's speech when he has the self-confidence, the intellect, the policy orientation, the votes, and the momentum of history required to win a vote of confidence — for himself and for the Jordanian political system's capacity to keep progressing?

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Wanted, a philosophy of free community

By Flora Lewis

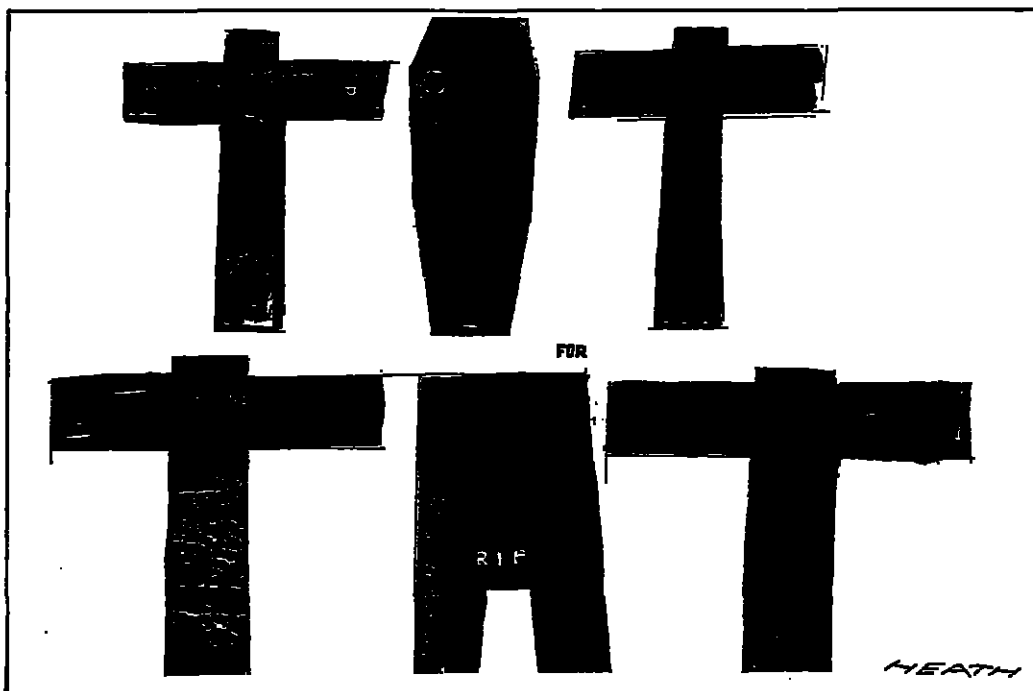
PARIS — Electorates everywhere are disenchanted, no longer convinced that the people in charge know how to make things work decently. After generations of passive compliance, voters in Italy and Japan have stirred themselves to throw the rascals out.

In the United States, the long, slow degradation of the city climate has at last struck people as a crisis beyond toleration, more urgent than troubles in distant lands. The rates of casual murder, of children born to single, often juvenile mothers, of third and fourth generations subsisting on welfare and crime, have fractured traditional self-satisfaction and confidence.

The phenomenon of a large, residual under-class can no longer be denied. They are not just people waiting their turn to be lifted on a tide of growth. They have been left behind by a society unable to absorb or lure them to accept its assumptions. They form gangs as the antidote to the loneliness of modern city life.

Concern is spreading at the loss of cohesion, of the West's sense of assurance that it is going the right way and can deal with the perceived, mounting challenges. A spectacularly successful capitalist like Sir James Goldsmith warns about "the trap" of failing to maintain the equilibrium and harmony with nature that he discerns in the perpetual rhythms of traditional societies.

The western malaise, the



signs of decadence, the fear that things are racing out of control give apparent substance to the arguments of those in power in developing countries that the West should keep its vaunted values to itself.

There are many in the world prepared to echo Chinese President Jiang Zemin's lecture to President Bill Clinton in Seattle that the claim to universal human rights is a form of unacceptable interference in their affairs and that the West should stick to what it does best, just doing business.

Samuel Huntington predicts that the next global conflict will be a "clash of civilisations," and he provokes tremors. As there is for horror movies, there is always a market for predictions of new cataclysm, identification of a new enemy.

And yet the tide of western self-doubt is matched by a tide of demand in the poor countries for a new way of life, for relief from the unending cycles of silent suffering. It isn't only for material welfare. The great appeal of fundamentalism is its promise of dignity, of self-respect, of a morally clean environment in an all-embracing community.

Intellectuals from traditional

societies, more and more of them comfortably conversant with both worlds, are arguing instead that it is democracy and human rights, evolved over centuries, which made possible the West's emergence from the ancient quagmires, and that they are indeed universals available to all who have the courage to insist upon them.

That is the theme of a two-part film made for French television's Antenne 2 from the book "The South Slope of Liberty," by Mahmoud Hussein, pseudonym for two Egyptians who work at United Nations

Education, Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). They identify concern for the individual, respect for each person in his or her own right, as the essential foundation of freedom, of the hopes for a truly flourishing community.

And they recognise the terrible strain, the pain of transformation from the comforting and yet stifling cocoon of tradition to personal responsibility, personal initiative, self-reliance. But that is what makes change possible and brings the capacity to adapt to change.

It seems to me that there is not a clash but a convergence of awareness working here. There is no either/or resolution of the question of individual versus community. Man is a social animal and needs support from his kind, but innovation, creativity, dynamism come with opportunity for individual effort.

There is something to take from other cultures, older ways of facing the travail of life and

the indifference of nature. But not at the expense of giving up the hard-won understanding of liberty, the noble burden of personal responsibility. It is the meaning of modernity, although it still needs community.

Accommodating both is necessarily the common goal, and that should be recognised. The philosophy of the required synthesis has not been adequately developed. There is some of it in the environmentalist movement, with its reminder that we are obliged to live within limits and that not exclude all concerns but self. But the ultimate goal in protecting nature is to nurture its capacity to support us as conscious, self-aware humans.

After the "me" generation and the old, resigned and hierarchical "they" generations, the pressures are to produce an "us" generation, each of us, endowed with human rights by the fact of vulnerability to suffering and the ability to think — International Herald Tribune.

LETTERS

The change within

To the Editor:

It is plain that changes in a political system require changes in people's social and cultural institutions, and this involves a multiplicity of social processes that often operate concurrently.

We are undergoing a social and political revolution, a radical modification of our political system. This change brings about conflicts between different kinds of social institutions and between individuals. Change cannot come in a neatly wrapped package. Conflicts have to be confronted and dealt with. The major conflict arises when people or institutions are faced with ideas about what is and what ought to be, and, more specifically, what it takes to achieve the "what ought to be". When this happens, various tensions ensue and these tensions manifest themselves in and between individual people.

"What is" happens to be the reality a society is revolting against to achieve "what ought to be". The transformation is a long, hard struggle, especially as old habits die hard and ideologies are so deep-rooted in our psychology that they cannot easily alter. We believe in change, but few the unknown and, as a consequence, there arises conflict in us and between us. An individual feels the frustration and the stress due to his or her inner conflict, which is consequently reflected between and among individuals. It is not until we revolt against fear and overcome it, that we will be able to achieve what we truly believe "ought to be".

To successfully start applying any change to our organisations, we have to make structural changes. Structure includes ideology, behaviour and a set of shared values, all of which operate within a social system's framework. Radical change in the social system requires change in the quality of social relationships which are individual based. We have to take the first step to climb up the ladder, and not just jump to the top, because then we face the inevitable — the fall.

The change has to be built-in in ourselves if it is to become a radical structural change that is practised to form the organisational change we long for.

The conflicts have to be overcome on an individual level before we start laying out the foundations of a solid democratic society and, in turn, of a political and organisational democratic system.

Ideology, attitudes and behaviour provide the framework which supports any social and political system. If ours, as individuals, are not genuinely democratic, then our institutions will never be. I believe that it is conflict within people rather than between them that we have to keep in mind when we speak of the dynamic aspect of social and political change, especially because one often involves the other.

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The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

CSCE — focus of Europe's hopes and failures

By Patrick Worsnip
Reuter

LONDON — Worthy and well-meaning, the conference on security and cooperation in Europe (CSCE), whose foreign ministers meet in Rome this week, embodies the hopes for a new order after the cold war — and the fading of those hopes.

After nearly two decades as a forum for wrangling over human rights between the communist East and the capitalist West, the CSCE looked set to emerge as the body that would heal Europe's divisions after the fall of the Berlin Wall four years ago.

An ambitious summit in Paris in 1990 launched a charter for a new Europe, full of lofty ideals, adopted a treaty slashing the armed forces of European states, and set up offices along the continent's former fault lines in Prague, Warsaw and Vienna.

But the new Europe turned out differently from the way the champions of the CSCE had imagined.

Instead of an era of peace, democracy and free trade, the continent was plunged almost immediately into a cauldron of ethnic conflicts that four decades of communism had suppressed in its eastern half.

The CSCE attempted to grapple with these problems, setting up conflict prevention

mechanisms and dispute procedures. But, with a membership swelling to a current total of 53 states, it found itself too cumbersome and weak to act decisively.

"The problem of the CSCE is it is run by consensus, so everything is the lowest common denominator," a western diplomat commented. "It does move, but slowly."

The Yugoslav conflict, which erupted within a week of the CSCE's first council of foreign ministers meeting in Berlin in June 1991, dealt an early blow to the organisation's hopes of presiding over an epoch of harmony and prosperity.

Out of its depth, the CSCE almost immediately turned the problem over to the European Community, and eventually to the United Nations and NATO.

The one consolation for the CSCE was that the Yugoslavia problem also defeated those much more powerful and long-established institutions.

The CSCE also tackled the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, a largely Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan.

War has been raging since 1988. It set up a negotiating group which has been trying to arrange a peace conference in Minsk, Belarus.

But the combatants have refused to come to the negotiating table, and the CSCE cannot force them.

The foreign ministers' annual meeting in Rome on Tuesday and Wednesday is likely to be dominated by Russia's bid to gain international backing and finance for it to play a peacekeeping role in the many conflicts tracking the former Soviet Union.

Diplomats say the CSCE is unlikely to give Moscow a blank cheque to intervene in disputes where it has strong strategic interests of its own, but will review each case on its merits.

It will be a strange turn for an organisation which the Soviet Union was itself instrumental in launching in 1972. Then Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev saw it as a collective security pact that would perpetuate communist control over East Europe.

In fact, western states turned it into a platform from which to attack communist restrictions on civil liberties. Tussles over human rights dominated successive "review conferences", two of which — in Madrid and Vienna — lasted three years each.

Many historians now believe the CSCE and the charters it adopted helped to inspire the peoples of Eastern Europe to overthrow their communist masters, a result quite the reverse of the one Brezhnev had intended.

For some, the collapse of

European communism in 1989 was the high point of the CSCE.

But there is general agreement in Europe that the organisation still has its uses, even if its achievements can only be measured in small steps.

Its all-embracing membership, extending from Canada to Kyrgyzstan, may be its chief weakness but is also its main strength, supporters argue.

The CSCE has been instrumental in supplying a forum in which everyone can meet on equal terms," one diplomat said.

Unable to send in peacekeeping troops of its own, the CSCE has sent monitors to problem areas including Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Estonia and Latvia, as well as Serbia from where they have now been expelled.

Diplomats say the situation has deteriorated in the troubled Serbian provinces of Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina since the monitors were kicked out in retaliation for the rump Yugoslavia's suspension from the CSCE.

The CSCE, earlier this year, also persuaded Estonia to tone down its citizenship law which was seen as discriminating against the large Russian minority there. Latvia has asked the CSCE to look at its own similar problem.

مركز الصحافة

Sunset for the blue men of the desert?

By Attilio Gaudio

TRENTO, Italy — As children, our imagination was captured by the desert knights of the Sahara, dressed all in blue, armed with long swords — the "tabouks" — javelins and leather shields. They ride their camels across the desert at lightning speed, knowing no home, no frontiers, no laws, no masters. They are driven only by the hunt for new pastures or enemies to fight.

Arab conquerors named the Touaregs "those forgotten by God." The Touaregs call themselves "free men" — Kel Tamacheck, those who speak the Tamacheck Berber dialect, or Kel Tagelmust, those who veil their faces.

Until recently, the camel was like a boat enabling the Touareg to cross the sea of desert. The sky was their only roof and the Sahara their country. Now that countries have gained independence from colonisation and their frontiers are defined, the existence of the Touareg is threatened by technological progress and wars, as well as by natural disasters, such as droughts of biblical proportions.

Could we be looking at a "final solution" for the Touareg tribes of the Sahara, a vast region of 8,600,000 square kilometres divided up within the boundaries of Western Sahara (former Spanish Sahara), Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt (which contain its northern reaches) and Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad and the Sudan (which make up the southern section). This is the question asked by many experts since these tribes took up arms in recent years to defend themselves and their centuries — old existence as nomads.

The International Institute of Anthropology in Paris and the Peace Forum of Trento in Northern Italy have just held a Euro-African Congress aimed at helping the Touareg back on the path to freedom and dignity. It was the first meeting of its kind dealing with nomadic, shepherd populations and their current problems in the Sahara.

The president of the Kidal "Assakok" (the nest) Association, a Mali Touareg called Acherif Ag. Mohamed explained in an interview that the main reason for the deterioration of his ancestral way of life in the independence of African countries. "Unwittingly or through ignorance, or both, the countries that inherited the lands of the Touareg and the Moors saw nomadism as a potential danger to national unity and power."

Mr. Mohamed says they categorised these proud, nomadic shepherds as rebels and slave-traders. Some countries reacted to this threat by strict border controls, he added, unlike the relaxed days of the colonialists. "More than two million Touaregs were condemned to life-threatening immobility. As initiatives were taken, they were more and more catastrophic and strangled our way of life."

These initiatives included disruption of grazing areas by drilling works, withdrawal of grazing rights, forcible break-up of caravans because they were considered illicit, heavy taxes and import duties and low-cost rental of Touareg lands to oil barons. "Our farming community has also been severely affected and split up by the terrible droughts of 1973 and 1984 and the arrival of the lorry, which is in serious competition with the camel," Mr. Mohamed said.

The armed rebellion began in May 1990, with the massacres of Tchén Tabaraden in Niger. "At the beginning of the year, the Naimy government agreed with Algeria to return 18,000 refugees from the droughts who were living in miserable conditions in border camps. Because they wanted to suppress the threat of resistance from Libyan Touareg forces that had military training in the 1960s, the Nigerian authorities negotiated simultaneously for the return of political exiles to their home country."

The authorities sought and obtained aid from some European countries for the resettlement of the Touaregs in Niger. "The wholesale diversion of international funds allocated to the Touaregs ignited the rebellion against this atrocious injustice," he said.

"Niger's army was in a state of war with the Touaregs," Mr. Mohamed explained. "Hundreds of civilians were arrested and tortured on the pretext of restoring order and crushing the so-called rebels. Ironically, it was Niger's army that caused the rebellion. This outrage quickly spread to the neighbouring country, Mali."

Centres of rebellion were organised in different areas. "The civilian population suffered ruthless reprisals at the hands of the Malian army and sought refuge en masse in neighbouring Algeria and Mauritania," Mohamed said. "When its inhabitants fled, the army took over occupation of the Sahara portion that's in Mali."

In January 1991, the central

government of Bamako (Mali) began negotiating with the Touaregs because, Mr. Mohamed said, it realised that "the guerrilla movement could last indefinitely and that terror was no weapon against the Touaregs. Algeria was concerned about the spread of war to its own Touareg minorities and played a mediation role."

Agreements were signed between the Touaregs and the Mali government at Tamanrasset. They provided for internal autonomy for the Touareg lands (an area as large as France), immediate withdrawal of the Malian army and the right of the Touaregs to negotiate directly with the international community for humanitarian aid and development cooperation. Four months later, Mali President Moussa Traoré was overthrown, the Tamanrasset agreements were challenged and armed struggle resumed.

On April 10, 1992, peace was restored through a "National Pact" signed by the new democratic government and the four main political-military Touareg movements. The Touaregs accepted measures of administrative decentralisation within the existing state as a substitute for the status of internal autonomy within a federal state, says Mr. Mohamed, paving the way for the return of nearly 100,000 refugees to the north of Mali. "In Niger, however," he added, "there has been no progress toward peace, despite President Ousmane's government being the first to be democratically elected."

Yet, the proposed fixed settlement plans are not the ideal solution for preserving Touareg culture. "We Touareg define our environment in terms of beauty," Mr. Mohamed explained. "Beauty is synonymous with life. For us, beauty is greenery stretching to infinity and rain brings this greenery. We have to satisfy ourselves by adapting and by taking steps to compensate for lack of greenery. That is how we become nomads."

"Until the middle of the 20th century, the nomadic shepherds of the Sahara lived in perfect harmony with their ecological milieu," he said. "Our way of life was not in conflict with nature, although we had to move at any moment to pastures that were best for our animals. We were consumers of pastures, but we did not stay long enough to destroy them, and the droppings of the animals ensured the spreading of seeds and manure for future

seasons. The cycle was never destroyed."

"In the Sahara, a tree is chopped down to make a mortar or a pulley. Knowing that these two utensils — which are so necessary to a way of life and may be used by a family for 10 years or so — it is nonsense to implicate the nomadic farmer in the phenomenon of desertification that threatens our planet."

Mr. Mohamed emphasised that Touaregs are nomads in order to "survive" in a land Saharans know best how to manage for their existence. "We are nomads because our whole environment is nomadic. The rain, the ponds, even the pastures, are nomadic because they can never be found in the same place... We are not nomads for the sake of tourism or sport, but because traveling is crucial to our people, our animals and everything around us."

A nomadic lifestyle in the Sahara in the next century is unlikely. "The current conditions for the Touareg to return to the nomadism of the past do not look favourable," argued Dr. Kéfélegui Mariko, Niger Secretary General of "SOS Sahel International Niger" and author of a book on the subject. "They are incompatible with modern-day life, which requires each society to be somewhat open toward others and to adapt to the socio-political context of a nation."

"Furthermore, Dr. Mariko said, "the specific problems facing the existence of the Touareg are related to the fact that other former nomadic peoples — like the Fulani (also called the Peul — a Muslim people disseminated throughout the southern Sahara) — easily accepted the move toward fixed settlements at the start of colonisation." He says the Fulani are more flexible and amenable by nature, and, in contrast, the Touareg are aggressive.

"The Fulani, unlike the Touareg, benefitted from education, medical care and all the other changes that facilitate their complete integration into the Sahel regions inhabited by other ethnic communities." Dr. Mariko is convinced that the protection and enhancement of the culture and identity of the Touareg in Mali, Niger, Algeria and Libya will depend on choices the Touaregs make, enabling them to live peacefully and understood by a world that, although imperfect, nevertheless aspires to global civilisation — World News Link.



Until the middle of the 20th century the nomad tribes of the Sahara lived a life suited to the harsh environment of

the desert but the Touaregs have been seen as a threat by African government (WNL photo)



St. Petersburg unhappy about plans to bury Lenin

By David Ljunggren
Reuters

ST. PETERSBURG — Crowds do not flock to the grey marble tomb tucked away in a corner of St. Petersburg's remote Volkovskoye cemetery, dominated by a statue of Vladimir Lenin's mother.

People prefer to visit graves of writers and scientists rather than spend time at the Lenin plot, which also contains the bodies of his two sisters and a brother-in-law.

But the quietness surrounding the tomb could be shattered by plans to remove the corpse of the Soviet state founder from his red marble Moscow mausoleum.

Authorities in the capital, keen to emphasise the final defeat of communism after an armed revolt last month, have asked President Boris Yeltsin to sign a decree to bury Lenin in St. Petersburg, which for decades was known as Leningrad.

Officials in Russia's second city are worried that an attempt to inter Lenin could provoke clashes with communists and could also be used by opposition parties as a weapon in the run-up to December

parliamentary elections.

The affair also raises deeper questions over whether there is any point in trying to bury the Soviet Union along with the corpse of its founder.

Metropolitan Ioann, head of the local Russian Orthodox Church, insists the body should be buried in Ulyanovsk, the central Russian town where Lenin was born in 1870.

Mayor Anatoly Sobchak, who two years ago backed the plan when the city voted to ditch the name Leningrad, is still keen.

"It's not that important where he is buried. It could be Ulyanovsk, Moscow or St. Petersburg. But the latter is preferable for several reasons," he told Reuters in an interview.

"There is plenty of evidence that before his death he asked to be buried next to his mother and sisters."

Lenin's aged niece says he made no such request and is supported by archivists who examined the notes taken by doctors attending the ailing leader throughout his last days.

Sergei Tsyplyayev, Mr. Yeltsin's local representative, says the matter should be put to one side for the time being. Boris Moiseyev, first deputy head of

the city council, is just as unenthusiastic.

"I would not want this to happen in St. Petersburg. It could turn into a political act which would have serious consequences, like clashes between pro- and anti-Marxists," he said.

Lenin was treated virtually like a human God for 70 years after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, officially portrayed as a model citizen, a paragon of virtue.

Although historians have since stripped away the veneer to reveal the portrait of a ruthless man capable of ordering the execution of children, he is still held in awe by millions.

Hardline communist leader Vladimir Tyulkin vows to hold a series of protests if the corpse is moved.

"Every normal person should condemn attempts to settle accounts with a dead opponent. The battle to bury him could cause further outrages," he warned.

Yuri Belov, local head of the Russian Communist Party, also vowed to oppose the reburial plan, which he described as "political sadism" and an attempt to provoke confrontation.

"Lenin is a symbol which already transcends ideology. He is in our culture, our history. This attempt at historic vandalism could offend the older population," he said. "There is no need to poison this part of our national consciousness."

If the plans go ahead they will undoubtedly raise strong protests from some older Russians who spent much of their lives under the slogan, "for Lenin."

Alexander Belyakov, head of the Leningrad regional administration, said the reburial plans had to wait.

"What is destroying Russia?" he asked. "It can never look calmly at the past. If you condemn the past, you condemn the future. He who shoots history with a rifle will

be shot by history with a cannon."

Sobchak denies the reburial would help erase Lenin's memory from Russia. "In a civilised state you have to work from the principle that you can't change history," he said.

"Plenty of my entourage ask me why we need this and say a new centre of communism will surely spring up from Lenin's tomb. I'm not afraid of this."

The Kremlin said in October that Lenin's embalmed body would stay in its Red Square mausoleum for the time being.

Yeltsin aides said priority should be given to a dignified burial for the remains of Tsar Nicholas II, his German-born wife Alexandra, and their five children, executed on Lenin's orders on July 17, 1918.

The people of St. Petersburg themselves, who voted narrowly to change the name from Leningrad in 1991, show little interest in the affair and prefer to concentrate on surviving Russia's economic crisis.

Irina Martova, wheeling her twin grandsons through the cemetery on a chilly winter's day, stopped to gaze at the

tomb. "It would be better if he were here," she said at last.

"All Russia's problems stem from the fact that he has still not been properly buried."

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Hawks relaunch struggle

(Continued from page 1)

since Sept. 13, according to an AFE count.

In Amman, the head of a PLO faction vowed to escalate attacks on Israel to avenge a raid on his South Lebanon headquarters.

"The raid came as a retaliation for the escalated armed attacks of our forces in the occupied territories in the last few weeks," Nayef Hawatmeh, head of the Damascus-based Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), told Reuters.

Israeli helicopter gunships blasted two Palestinian guerrilla bases at the 'Ain Al Hilweh refugee camp in South Lebanon on Sunday, one of them a DFLP base.

"The raid on our headquarters proves that the conflict with the occupiers and the intifada is still on," Mr. Hawatmeh said.

He said the raid caused much damage but it would only motivate his group to step up its attacks to foil the PLO-Israeli peace accord.

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Swiss say yes to VAT

ZURICH (R) — The Swiss voted Sunday to introduce value added tax (VAT) to curb a soaring government deficit and fall into line with other West European nations.

But voters came down firmly in the referendum against a ban on tobacco and alcohol advertising, a proposal put forward by health experts but opposed by the government.

Results showed 1,338,757 voted in favour of and only 669,909 voted against introducing a universal VAT on goods and services at the start of 1995 to replace a more selective turnover tax levied only on goods.

In a surprise move, a 57.8 per cent majority also voted to set the VAT rate at 6.5 per cent instead of the current 6.2 per cent for turnover tax. About 44 per cent of the electorate went to the poll.

"The decision of the people to vote for a 6.5 per cent VAT is extremely gratifying and an encouragement for the government to continue on the path it has started," Finance Minister Otto Stich told a news conference in Bern.

"Much effort is needed to get the federal budget back into shape," he said.

Swiss voters had voted against introduction of VAT in three previous referendums, in 1977, 1979 and 1991.

Claude Longchamp, Switzerland's leading pollster and head of the GFS Social Research Institute, said the desolate state of federal finances had helped to persuade voters

to approve VAT.

The government's campaign was aided by the united stand of all four coalition parties in favour of the new tax and by Mr. Stich's unusually vigorous campaigning.

The finance minister had argued that the additional 1.4 billion Swiss francs (\$934 million) a 6.5 per cent VAT would bring was desperately needed to curb a federal budget deficit expected to exceed seven billion Swiss francs (\$4.67 billion) next year.

He said the turnover tax, first introduced during World War II and called warenumsatzsteuer in German, or "west" for short, was obsolete, penalised business investment, and hampered exporters.

Parliament and big industry backed VAT, seeing it as a key requirement to make the economy more competitive after last December's referendum rejecting Swiss membership of the European Economic Area (EEA).

The new VAT will be much lower than the VAT in other European countries, such as Germany with its 15.0 per cent tax, France with 18.6 per cent and Italy with 19.0 per cent.

Most of the Swiss business world welcomed the Sunday's vote.

"Voters have clearly realised something must be done in the tax area for Switzerland as an economic centre," the Swiss Trade and Industry Association (Vorort) said in a statement.

The Swiss Mechanical Engineering Industry Association (VSM) said VAT represented a significant improvement for industry as the turnover tax hurt investment.

But Switzerland's hotel and restaurant industry, now exempt from the turnover tax, said VAT would increase its costs and reduce profit margins.

"hotels and restaurants form an important part of Swiss tourism, which must not lose ground to foreign competitors because of VAT. We reiterate the demand for a reduced tax rate for our industry," the Swiss Hotels and Restaurants Association said.

Results showed an overwhelming 1,518,492 against a ban on alcohol advertising and only 512,709 in favour, while 1,512,772 were against and 518,051 for a ban on tobacco advertising.

The proposal to ban such advertising was brought to a national vote by a group of doctors, pharmacists and nurses who collected over 100,000 signatures.

They argued that a ban would help reduce tobacco and alcohol consumption, raise health levels and cut the cost of treating illnesses caused by smoking and drinking.

But the government questioned whether tobacco and alcohol use would fall and said the economic damage to Swiss media and organisers of cultural sports events from an advertising ban would outweigh any benefits.

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Tokyo stocks end at 54-week low

TOKYO (R) — Tokyo stocks wrestled with despair over the grim economic outlook Monday, with the Nikkei average plummeting more than 1,000 points at one stage in volatile trading before ending above the 16,000 mark.

The chaos in the stock market pushed the dollar up against the yen and rammed the benchmark Japanese government bond to its lowest yield in six years.

The Nikkei average ended a hefty 647.66 points or 3.87 per cent lower at 16,078.71 — its lowest close since Nov. 17, 1992, when it was at 15,993.48.

Investors were gloomy about the nation's poor economic outlook following an onslaught of poor half-year corporate results in recent weeks.

Comments from Japanese ministers throughout the day fuelled concern the government was not acting quickly enough to stem the tailspin, and this pitched the market deeper into dejection.

At one stage, the Nikkei fell 1,054.4 points to 15,671.97, the lowest intra-day level since August 1992.

Index-linked buying and short-covering helped to spur a rebound in the afternoon.

Analysts and brokers said Tokyo's shaky market was still on a downward trend, adding that it would not recover substantially until the government came up with effective fixes to pull the economy out of the doldrums.

Growing official alarm was evident Monday afternoon when Hideaki Kumano, vice-

minister for international trade and industry, told reporters: "We are very worried about the plunge."

But Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa told reporters earlier in the day the government was not planning any counter-measures.

Asked if the government planned any action, Mr. Hosokawa said: "No. As I told you, supply and demand are up to the market, so we will continue to monitor it."

The prime minister's comment echoed remarks earlier by Finance Minister Hirohisa Fujii, who told reporters the government was not complacent but must not intervene.

"(Market) outsiders should not get involved or comment on ups and downs but that does not mean we are just sitting back and relaxing... we are fully aware of the drastic moves."

The Nikkei average has now shed 5,069 points or 24.0 per cent from its most recent closing high — 21,148.11 on Sept. 13.

On Monday, sales aimed at stemming losses on futures contracts drove the Nikkei down in the morning.

Bank shares were hit by heavy sell orders after their poor results announcements on Thursday and Friday, weighing heavily on the Nikkei average and the broader Tokyo in the absence of active buyers.

On the currency market, the dollar finished firmer against the yen on interbank selling of yen in response to huge losses in the stock market.

Kohl urges Germans to work to overcome recession

FRANKFURT (R) — Chancellor Helmut Kohl urged Germans Sunday to roll up their sleeves and work to overcome economic problems in order to haul the country out of the worst recession since World War II.

"We need a healthy economy (with) secure and competitive jobs," he said in his speech in the southwestern city of Karlsruhe. "For this we must roll up our sleeves in the current recession and structural crisis, just as we did with great success in the 1950s."

Mr. Kohl told the conference organised by the German Chamber of Handicrafts that he favoured changes in the labour market.

"It is... time for new things to be thought out and put into action concerning the labour market," he said. "We do not need utopian patent recipes. In their place, we need new, unconventional solutions."

The chancellor was speaking after Volkswagen A.G., Europe's largest carmaker, agreed Thursday with the country's most powerful labour union on a controversial plan to introduce a four-day week at the company's German plants.

A paper from German Economics Minister Guenther Rexrodt this weekend proposed sweeping changes to the country's labour market as industry leaders predicted a further sharp rise in unemployment next year.

In the position paper made available to Reuters, Mr. Rexrodt called for an end to what he termed "taboos in labour market politics," in order to stimulate employment.

He said a new direction was needed on wage policy, a secondary job market should be created with lower wages and greater flexibility was needed on working hours.

The paper was sent to leading officials in Mr. Rexrodt's Free Democratic Party, partners in Germany's ruling coalition.

Employers' leaders told the Cologne Express Sunday newspaper they saw no upturn for the weak German economy and they thought the jobs market was unlikely to improve in 1994.

Around 3.5 million Germans are now out of a job, Hans-Peter Stihl, head of

the German Federation of Chambers of Commerce (DIHT), told the newspaper: "I can see no economic spring for so long as the collapse in investments and exports remains so dramatic."

He added: "I do not see five million unemployed, but four million are possible."

Klaus Murrmann, head of the German Employers' Association told the paper: "The number of unemployed will rise further in coming months. He also predicted a rise to four million."

West Germany is facing the worst recession since World War II. In east Germany, recovery has been slower than expected since unification in 1990 and manufacturing industry in particular is still very weak.

Employers and some politicians have called for labour reforms to help West German firms overcome a structural crisis marked by overstaffing, lavish benefits and long paid holidays.

Mr. Rexrodt, who favours liberalisation of labour regulations, said in his paper German firms should allow less-qualified workers to earn less, with the option of working longer hours.

He said free collective bargaining could only remain a pillar of the German economy if it allowed as many people as possible to find work. Greater differentiation in wages was needed according to region, sector and qualification, he added.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY NOVEMBER 30, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Today finds considerable tension in the air from individuals who have taken on more than they can handle and have just started to realise it. Maintain a cheerful at all times.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Be receptive to making new allies and associates today or tonight and you also will have considerable energy to put in effect, making new challenges.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Whatever discussions you wish to have with your attachment or arrangements to be made out between the two of you will be the right time now.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Be more openminded to suggestions and recommendations given to you by those outside associates with whom you have contact, join force with them.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Consider well how you can best schedule your activities of a labour or desk work duty during this week and make exact plans to do so.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Recreational activities and enjoyments that appeal to you can not only be enjoyed today but also plans made for expressing them in the future.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Now you can stretch out with members of your family and household whatever joint problems face you if you keep an objective attitude and don't flinch.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) Make sure that you communicate with and go and visit as many persons as possible this week with whom you have routine contact, let them know your wishes.

SCORPIO: (October 24 to November 21) Think about what you can do to get the information from newspapers and other periodicals that give sage advice about how to have greater abundance.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Whatever you have in mind of a personally expansive nature can be put into motion quickly now with intermittent benefits flowing to you.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You are able to get off alone or with a very inspired expert and get new and improved views confidentially from these quiet, reflective moments.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) A wonderful day for you to be out in the world seeing as many friends and acquaintances as are available and you can draw bonds closer.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Whatever you have in mind of a public nature can be executed by the definite action which you take at this time to increase your prestige.

World Bank warns China to keep reins on economy

BEIJING (R) — China's economy is growing too fast and it must keep a tight grip on money supply to restrain inflation, a World Bank official warned Monday.

"The growth in the issue of money is still too high," said Hwa Erh-Cheng, a senior economist in the bank's Beijing office, in an analysis published in the People's Daily.

"The fall in the rate of inflation cannot be considered large," he added. "The trade balance continues to worsen. At the end of September, the inflationary pressure remained very high."

But Mr. Hwa praised the government for the retrenchment policy it launched in July to cool the economy, saying this had succeeded in bringing down fixed-asset investment and preventing financial chaos.

Many Chinese believe the retrenchment policy had run its course following a call for "high, healthy growth" by a Communist Party meeting earlier this month.

Mr. Hwa said domestic output in 1993 would grow by 12-13 per cent compared with 1992, adding that this was not appropriate for continued long-term growth.

Latest official figures show that inflation in China's 35 major cities averaged an annual 21.1 per cent in Octo-

ber, with the highest level of 31.9 per cent in Haikou, capital of Hainan province in the booming south.

Mr. Hwa partly blamed inflation on a surge in the money supply in the first half of the year. Official figures show that the amount of cash in circulation at the end of June was 54 per cent higher than at the same time the previous year.

In the first six months of 1990, 1991 and 1992, the central bank recalled more money than it issued. But in the first half of this year it issued a net 52.756 billion yuan (\$9.1 billion) of cash.

Mr. Hwa said efforts to tighten monetary policy over the past three months has not had sufficient impact on inflation and urged the government to stick to its policy.

"Relaxing too early this tight money policy may lose the hard-won effect of controlling inflation, causing inflationary expectations to rise again," he said.

Although the government has not officially announced an end to its retrenchment policy, the central bank has started to relax its grip on credit in order to help cash-strapped state firms.

A Western diplomat said state firms had been severely hit by the credit squeeze, with

many having to stop production and send workers home.

Dai Xianglong, vice-governor of the People's Bank of China, said earlier this month it was not worth sacrificing the pace of economic growth in order to bring down inflation.

Foreign and Chinese economists said the high level of inflation was likely to persist until the end of 1994.

A Japanese economist said inflation in 1993 will be about 15 per cent nationwide and more than 20 per cent in major cities. The level in 1994 will be about the same or a little lower, he said.

"If the government had persisted in its policy of controlling money issue and credit, inflation would have come down," he said. "But it gave up after only about four months."

"In early 1994, inflation will continue to develop and the Chinese economy will continue on its path of high speed, high incomes, high consumption and high prices," commented the Asia Pacific economic newspaper, published in Guangzhou.

A Chinese economist said the high inflation rate was caused by an excess printing of money this year, a construction boom that is pushing up prices for building materials and a liberalisation of prices.

U.S. pledges to back Ethiopia's ailing economy

ADDIS ABABA (R) — Washington plans to step up financial support for Ethiopia, struggling to build a free market economy out of two decades of failed hardline Marxism, a top U.S. diplomat has said.

Ambassador Mark Baas told Reuters in an interview his government was "extremely pleased" with the new liberal economic policies of Ethiopia, one of the world's poorest countries.

Mr. Baas said his country, which has already pumped some \$150 million into Ethiopia for the 1993/94 year, would now shift its priority to development aid from humanitarian assistance.

Relations between Washington and Addis Ababa soured under the rule of Marxist military strongman Mengistu Haile Mariam who was overthrown by rebels in 1991. The United States cut off all aid other than humanitarian assistance during Mengistu's regime.

The U.S. government was one of the major food aid donors for Ethiopia during the great famine of the 1980s in which more than one million people are said to have died. Donor countries spent more than a billion dollars fighting the famine.

"Since we are pleased with the new economic policies of Ethiopia, which allow the private sector to play a major role, we have also shifted our policy from humanitarian assistance towards development assistance," Mr. Baas said.

The two governments renewed cooperation and signed a formal agreement on economic ties last week after a 17-year break.

"The development assistance in the field of agriculture will focus on Ethiopia's farm production with the aim of making the country self sufficient in food," he said.

"Part of the assistance will also be used to promote the level of health care, in the country, to improve the standard of education and for balance of payment support," he added.

Mr. Baas said under Mengistu the country was virtually destroyed and its economy bankrupted because of poor policies.

"The country was virtually destroyed and the economy was in a very bad shape because of Mengistu's disastrous economic policies," he said.

Most of Ethiopia's 50-million people are peasants with a per capita income of less than \$100 a year.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



JUMBLE.

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

TAERF

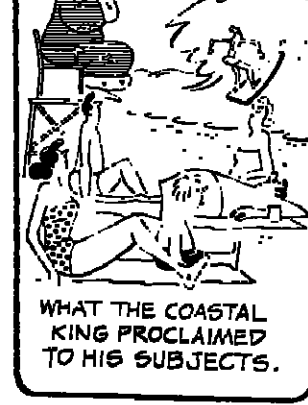
PUMIO

SMIREY

SNORGT

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argriton

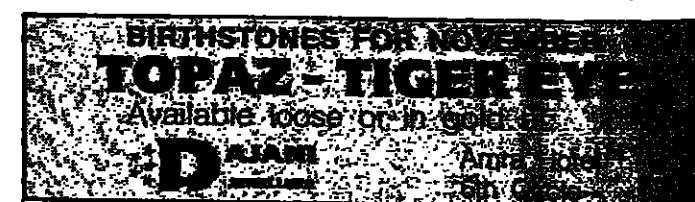


Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

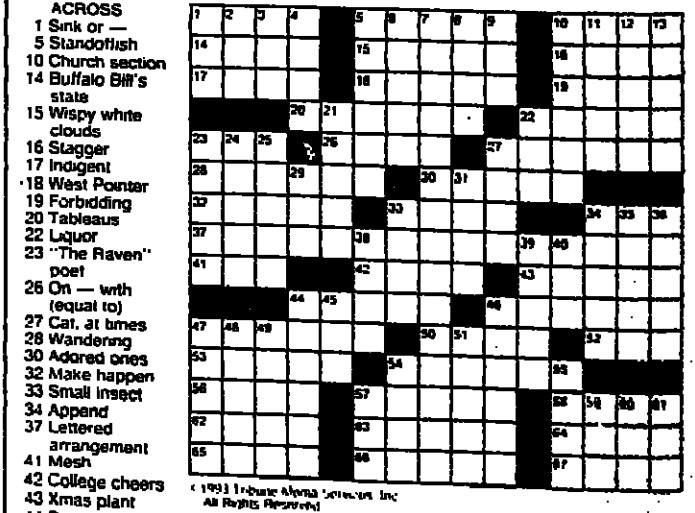
Print answer here:

Yesterday's Jumbles: OXIDE FABLE UPHELD ESTATE

Answer: What the crooked gambler turned carpenter did — HE FIXED TABLES



THE Daily Crossword by Samuel K. Flegler



- ACROSS
- Sink or —
 - Standoffish
 - Church section
 - Buffalo Bill's state
 - Wisp white
 - Stagger
 - Indigent
 - West Pointer
 - Forbidding
 - Tableaux
 - Liquor
 - "The Raven" poet
 - On — with (request to)
 - Can, at times
 - Wandering
 - Adored ones
 - Make happen
 - Small insect
 - Append
 - Littered
 - arrangement
 - Mesh
 - College cheers
 - Kmas plant
 - Paper measure
 - Easily accomplished
 - Back to the
 - Coconut fiber
 - Part of A.B.A.
 - Heavily hunter
 - Learn adherent
 - Lively tune
 - He said his soul to the devil
 - Seap
 - Mom's country
 - Eagle's nest
 - Head
 - Lean-to
 - Type of bed
 - Neap, i.e.
 - Use a straw
 - Court
 - Jima
 - Red planet
 - Rescuing willingly
 - Clamoring vine
 - Judge's admonition
 - Raw minerals
 - Fiddle
 - Discription?
 - Specialized vocabularies
 - Ross —
 - Commander
 - Gantry
 - Crete capital
 - Remainder
 - Door
 - 23 Hut
 - 24 Paper cape
 - 25 Burst form
 - 27 Mel. gp.
 - 28 Bat wood
 - 31 Estrade
 - 33 Equipment
 - 34 Off-the-shelf
 - 35 Perry's Street
 - 36 Harp blower
 - 37 French cheese
 - 38 Chicago airport
 - 40 Flashed bird
 - 44 Refurried to
 - 45 Samovar
 - 46 Purly
 - 47 Grasses
 - 48 Dickens' Heap
 - 49 Flashed bird
 - 51 Actor Davis
 - 54 Early Mexican
 - 55 Debatable
 - 57 Not many
 - 58 Inaugural
 - 59 Inaugural
 - 60 English letter
 - 61 Potato bud

Economy

JORDAN TIMES, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1993 7

Philippines loses \$3.2b in uncollected taxes

MANILA (R) — The Philippine government loses about 90 billion pesos (\$3.4 billion) in potential revenues a year due to tax evasion and exemptions granted to industries, a study says. Tax evaders account for 40 billion pesos (\$1.4 billion) of the losses while another 29 billion pesos (\$1 billion) is lost due to loopholes in the collection of value added tax imposed on goods and services, according to the study published in the Manila Times newspaper. Another 29 billion pesos is lost due to tax exemptions given by the Board of Investments to investors, said the study prepared by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, a private think tank. The study said that if all the taxes were collected there would be no need for the congress to pass new tax laws being proposed by the government to raise revenues.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 29/11/1993

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADED VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
AMMAN BANK	52,462	5,820	5,840	5,860
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	1,111	1,111	1,111	1,111
JORDAN POSTAL BANK	1,773	1,740	1,770	1,740
JORDAN DEVELOPMENT BANK	18,721	3,210	3,210	3,210
JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	47,808	2,210	2,210	2,210
JORDAN SECURITIES BANK	9,042	3,080	3,080	3,080
JORDAN TRADING BANK	1,122	1,122	1,122	1,122
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	3,778	3,900	3,900	3,900
JORDAN BANK FOR COMMERCIAL	3,950	4,050	4,050	4,050
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	8,400	6,720	6,720	6,720
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	17,515	4,280	4,280	4,280
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	22,278	1,460	1,460	1,460
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	20,506	2,190	2,190	2,190
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	17,515	1,460	1,460	1,460
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	2,310	3,350	3,350	3,350
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	188	3,150	3,150	3,150
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	5,180	2,940	2,940	2,940
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	166,079	1,330	1,330	1,330
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	918	1,200	1,200	1,200
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	900	4,450	4,450	4,450
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	27,712	3,650	3,650	3,650
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,155	1,940	1,940	1,940
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	424	1,100	1,100	1,100
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	48,621	2,010	2,010	2,010
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	6,920	2,620	2,620	2,620
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	124,902	1,820	1,820	1,820
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	3,234	3,930	3,930	3,930
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	9,968	2,900	2,900	2,900
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	10,960	7,000	7,000	7,000
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	30,046	10,500	10,500	10,500
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	116,115	7,950	7,950	7,950
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	19,418	7,050	7,150	7,400
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,862	1,480	1,480	1,480
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	840	3,550	3,550	3,550
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	7,735	2,650	2,650	2,650
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	6,393	3,360	3,370	3,350
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	51,910	1,480	1,480	1,480
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	24,645	2,100	2,100	2,080
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	23,083	9,600	10,000	9,850
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	3,930	6,160	6,170	6,150
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,530	0,350	0,360	0,360
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,470	3,470	3,470	3,480
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	2,471	2,160	2,080	2,250
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	900	6,000	6,000	6,000
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	12,125	4,150	4,150	4,150
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	13,429	1,090	1,110	1,090
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	3,930	6,160	6,170	6,150
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	21,443	7,800	8,000	7,950
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,360	3,700	3,750	3,750
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	8,193	6,160	6,170	6,150
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	3,488	1,230	1,260	1,270
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	2,310	3,470	3,470	3,480
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	84,586	4,790	5,000	4,850
GRAND TOTAL				1,350,438

NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET: 1,562,118
TRADED VOLUME IN THE PARALLEL MARKET: 1,350,438

Saudi Arabian imports decline in first half of this year

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia's imports declined by 12 per cent in the first half of this year following a surge caused by the Gulf crisis, a leading economist said. Non-oil exports by the world's largest oil producer and exporter rose in the same period due to export promotion measures and increased private sector investments in the economy, said Henry Azzam, chief economist at the Jeddah-based National Commercial Bank. His study was published in the bank's latest monthly report received by Reuters Monday. In 1992, total imports rose 14.7 per cent on the previous year's level to 111.67 billion riyals (\$29.8 billion) before dropping by 12 per cent in the first half of the current year to around 60.2 billion riyals (\$16 billion), Mr. Azzam said. Mr. Azzam said non-oil exports rose by 1.2 per cent to 5.8 billion riyals (\$1.5 billion) in the first half of 1993 compared to the same period the previous year. He did not give figures for the first half of 1992, but said that total non-oil exports for the year stood at 12.5 billion riyals (\$3.3 billion). "In the past six years exports of non-petrochemically manufactured goods increased substantially, in response partly to the various export promotion measures as well as the huge private sector investments in industry," he said. Mr. Azzam said Saudi exporters and importers were seeking new forms of trade finance, including export credit guarantees, Islamic financing schemes and other counter-trade arrangements while foreign suppliers to the kingdom are beginning to provide financing deals to help maintain their market share. "In the absence of a national export finance institution, Saudi companies have become big users of export credit and guarantee facilities offered by the regional development organisations," he added.

World milk and butter output drops, GATT says

GENEVA (R) — World production of milk and butter is expected to fall by one to two per cent in 1993, continuing a downward trend since the start of the decade, the GATT international trade watchdog reported Monday. In an annual survey of the international market for dairy products, it said that at the same time production of whole milk powder was growing and global output of cheese was boosted by continued growth in demand. The report, produced by GATT for the 16-member International Dairy Arrangement (IDA), said the overall drop in milk output was due to economic upheaval in former communist countries and to government efforts to reduce surpluses in Europe and Canada. The IDA, now in its 14th year of operation, includes all European Community (EC) members and most other dairy producers but not the United States. It aims to achieve greater and freer world dairy trade under stable market conditions. In 1992, the report said, total world milk production was estimated at 518 million tonnes, two per cent below the level for 1991. Of this, cow's milk output declined by three per cent to 455 million tonnes. Butter and butter oil production dropped by 2.5 per cent to 7.03 million tonnes in 1992. Against a background of declining demand, it was expected to drop by a further two per cent this year to 6.89 million tonnes. GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, said milk production had increased in Australia, whose 1993 output was expected to be the highest since 1972, in New Zealand, likely to beat its 1992 record in 1993, and in the United States. The report said milk production was also on the rise in developing countries — particularly India, China and some Latin American states — against a background of growing consumption levels.

MEES sees possibility of big oil price drop

NICOSIA (R) — The Middle East Economic Survey (MEES) said Monday that OPEC was facing a significant and perhaps long-term drop in oil prices that could hurt members. It said that even the most optimistic analysts were not very hopeful that prices would improve significantly in the coming month. The danger was that the oil price had been fluctuating in a band of \$15-\$20 per barrel for benchmark Brent crude over the past few years may now move down to a lower band of perhaps \$10-\$15, the newsletter commented. "The effect of such a development on the finances of the OPEC producers would obviously be catastrophic," MEES said. The authoritative newsletter said that at last week's OPEC talks, Saudi Arabian Oil Minister Hisham Nazer was understood to have opposed any pro-rata production cuts from its quota of eight million barrels per day (b/d). "By keeping the present 24.52 million b/d production ceiling and component quotas unchanged in defiance of heavy market pressure for a tangible reduction in supply, OPEC is running a serious risk of a significant and perhaps long-lasting deterioration in prices, even from the already depressed levels prevailing before the conference began," MEES said. It said ministers were "hoping against hope" that the initial price fall will be short-lived as winter demand rises. "However, even the most optimistic are not very hopeful about any marked improvement in prices over the coming months," it added. MEES said the sanguine view of the oil markets held by such leading OPEC figures as Venezuelan Energy Minister, Alvaro Parra — who believes prices soon will recover after an initial drop — was not shared by most oil industry analysts. It said the price pessimists fear that there is really no discernible floor under the price slide. "They point out that the market seems to be consistently testing lower and lower price levels in an effort to establish a floor in the form of an effective reaction by OPEC on the supply side when the price pain becomes intolerable" — a reaction which MEES pointed out was not forthcoming last week. It said OPEC's critics point to a return by OPEC to market share rather than price and say OPEC seemed to be suffering from a loss of direction and inability "to face up to unpalatable realities." It said they point to the appeal to those outside OPEC when OPEC itself needs to play the residual supplier. It noted that the unusually late date of March 25 for the next ministerial meeting was set to avoid conflict with the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan and the Iranian new year. "But it may well prove necessary to hold an extraordinary meeting earlier than that if the market gets out of hand once again," it said.

INDIAN CULTURAL GATHERING

On Friday, Dec. 3 at the premises of the Embassy of India. Functions begin at 11:30 a.m. Cultural programmes and games begin at 12:00 noon sharp. All Indians are welcome.

Financial Markets

Jordan Times
In co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York 26/11/93	Tokyo 29/11/93
Sterling Pound	1.4790	1.4795
Deutsche Mark	1.7138	1.7154
Swiss Franc	1.4990	1.5010
French Franc	5.9225	5.9215**
Japanese Yen	108.25	109.29
European Currency Unit	1.1220	1.1210**

USD Per JYD: European Opening at 8:00 a.m. GMT

Precious Metals Date: 29/11/1993

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	375.90	7.40	Silver	4.64	0.100

21 Karat

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Date: 29/11/1993

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7010	0.7030
Sterling Pound	1.0360	1.0412
Deutsche Mark	0.4083	0.4103
Swiss Franc	0.4664	0.4667
French Franc	0.1183	0.1189
Japanese Yen	0.6407	0.6439
Dutch Guilder	0.3637	0.3655
Swedish Krona	*****	*****
Italian Lira	0.0414	0.0416
Belgian Franc	*****	*****

For JYD

Other Currencies Date: 29/11/1993

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.8360	1.8630
Lebanese Lira	0.04027	0.04110
Saudi Riyal	0.1816	0.1882
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.2200	2.3100
Qatari Riyal	0.1895	0.1919
Egyptian Pound	0.2050	0.2220
Omani Riyal	1.7800	1.8230
UAE Dirham	0.1895	0.1919
Greek Drachma	0.2850	0.3170
Cypriot Pound	1.3490	1.3750

For JYD

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Monday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	Canadian dollar
1.3323/33	Deutsche marks
1.7150/60	Dutch guilders
1.9240/50	Swiss francs
1.5000/10	Belgian francs
36.23/27	French francs
5.9179/29	Italian lire
1695.6/7.1	Japanese yen
109.13/23	Swedish crowns
8.4054/25	Norwegian crowns
7.4410/10	Danish crowns
6.7875/75	
\$1.4788/98	
One ounce of gold	
\$376.40/376.90	

JORDAN MARKET PLACE

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Jordan Times' JORDAN MARKET PLACE

EC ministers pressure warring parties to end Yugoslav war

GENEVA (Agencies) — EC ministers met with the leaders of all the warring parties in former Yugoslavia here Monday in a bid to rekindle peace efforts, but a Bosnian Serb refusal to consider any new territorial concessions in Bosnia left little room for optimism.

Belgian Foreign Minister Willy Claes opened the meeting with an appeal to belligerents to reconsider a peace plan worked out in September under which Bosnia-Herzegovina would be partitioned into autonomous Croat, Serb and Muslim ministates.

None of the players expressed any degree of optimism at the outset of the conference, the first meeting of all warring parties since the mostly-Muslim Bosnian parliament rejected the September plan to end the 20-month-old war.

In rejecting the plan, the parliament demanded the Bosnian Serbs hand over additional territory. Their position was taken up last week by the EC, which said international sanctions against Serbia could be eased if the Bosnian Serbs were to agree to some territorial concessions.

But Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic rejected the initiative Sunday.

EC negotiator Lord Owen warned last week that humanitarian aid could be cut off to the former Yugoslavia this spring if the warring parties could not reach a peace agreement, a threat repeated Monday by French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe.

In an interview with the French business daily, Les Echos, Juppe said U.N. troops might also be pulled out.

Mr. Claes, whose government holds the revolving EC presidency, told the conference Monday that the EC was prepared to offer economic assistance and guarantees to uphold a peace deal.

And, while not explicitly repeating these threats to cut off aid, he also warned that the international community would not understand the warring parties' "failure to seize upon the chance being offered to the parties to put an end to the tragedy."

Lord Owen also said here Monday that he would make both "threats and promises" in the bid to get a compromise peace agreement worked out.

Lord Owen said he would "try and tell the warring parties" what everybody but an idiot could tell, that this is a negotiable solution on offer here and there is no need to go on fighting.

U.N. mediator Thorvald Stoltenberg said in a message to the conference that the people of Bosnia faced another winter of war simply because of disagreement over "a small percentage of territory."

The EC ministers held a plenary session with the warring parties — including the presidents of Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia and Bosnia and the leaders of the Bosnian Serbs and Croats — before a series of bilateral talks in which key EC players were to take on some of the warring parties individually.

Observers from the United States, Russia and Turkey were also attending.

The latest plan from the EC, in line with proposals first put forward by France and Ger-

many, calls for the gradual lifting of international sanctions against the rump Yugoslavia in exchange for further territorial concessions by the Bosnian Serbs.

The EC also wants further pledges from the warring parties not to interfere with humanitarian convoys and an undertaking by Croatia and Serbs in Croatia not to escalate their dispute over the Serb-held region of Krajina.

"The situation in Bosnia is so tragic and the possibilities of disaster this winter so strong that we felt that we had to make a renewed effort" to rekindle the peace process, British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said on arriving here.

Mr. Hurd said he did not know if there were greater chances of peace now, but the EC "had to try" to end the war.

Spanish Foreign Minister Javier Solanas said, "We hope to give a new impulse from the humanitarian point of view and also from the political point of view."

Bosnia's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic, for his part, said before leaving Sarajevo Sunday he would call on the U.N. to use force if necessary to get humanitarian aid through enemy lines.

Meanwhile, one person was killed in the southern Bosnian city of Mostar by a Muslim artillery attack, Croatian radio reported Monday.

The state radio said Sunday's attack stopped when Bosnian Croat artillery opened fire on Muslim positions in the city.

The Bosnian capital

Sarajevo was without electricity overnight after a pylon was believed to have been damaged in fighting or as a result of sabotage.

Sarajevo Radio said an attempt would be made to restore power later Monday.

Fighting between Bosnian Serbs and Muslims held up a U.N. relief convoy to the Muslim-held northern Bosnian town of Tuzla Monday, and heavy snowfalls halted two further convoys, U.N. officials said.

"One 26-truck convoy with 240 tonnes of aid for Tuzla is stalled in no man's land between Caparde and Kalesija because of local fighting," Peter Kessler, spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), told Reuters in Zagreb.

More than 30 cm (12 inches) of snow has fallen in central Croatia and northern Bosnia overnight, creating further problems for the distribution of aid, Mr. Kessler said.

"We have had to postpone two convoys for Velika Kladusa and Jajce due to heavy snow, and the weather may really hamper more of our movements in the next 24 hours," Mr. Kessler said.

He said it was "a good sign" one convoy with winter material had reached the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica Saturday after a delay of almost one day. He said a further convoy of nine trucks, including one with shoes, was on its way Monday.

"But the real test will come Thursday, when we plan to bring in building materials for 350 prefabricated housing units to Srebrenica," Mr. Kessler said.

Secret papers to vindicate U.K.-IRA contact

LONDON (R) — Secret papers on contacts between the British government and the IRA will prove London was not in negotiations with guerrillas, the government said Monday.

The documents, detailing almost a year of exchanges between the Irish Republican Army (IRA) leadership and the British government, would "make it clear we stand by our public principles in private," said a senior government official.

British Prime Minister John Major's drive for peace in Northern Ireland has been put in jeopardy by disclosures of contacts with the IRA — guerrillas dedicated to overthrowing more than 300 years of British rule in Northern Ireland.

Hardline Protestants committed to union with Britain have called for Mr. Major and Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew to resign, alleging they misled parliament and the country over saying they would not talk to "terrorists."

IRA propagandists also say Britain is lying.

But government officials said the papers, to be released alongside a statement to parliament by Sir Patrick, would show there was no question of either man having to resign.

The 30 to 40 pages of papers would show "that we were not in negotiations about the substance of the future of Northern Ireland," the senior official said. The contacts were just that, not negotiations or talks in any way, he added.

They would show the IRA approached the government on Feb. 22 with what appeared to be a genuine offer of peace, saying "the conflict is over" and seeking further advice.

Among the papers was what amounted to an apology or at least an expression of "sadness" from the IRA two days after a bombing in the northern English town of Warrington on March 20 which killed two young boys and injured 56 other people.

Officials gave a flavour of the papers to reinforce the public position of Mr. Major



Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams speaks at a press conference at Conway Mill in Belfast, Northern Ireland (AFP photo)

and Sir Patrick that it would have been irresponsible and unforgivable not to respond to a possible peace overture to end the 25-year-old Northern Ireland conflict.

The Conservative government has repeatedly said it will not talk to or negotiate with the IRA until it renounces violence.

Unionist leaders leaked details of the dealings with the IRA. Republicans in turn joined their enemies in accusing both Sir Patrick and Mr. Major of lying about the level of talks.

"They lied and lied and lied and then their lies caught up on them," headline Protestant Democratic Unionist Party leader Ian Paisley told the British Broadcasting Corporation Radio.

On the other side of the conflict Sinn Féin, the political wing of the IRA, sought to add to Mr. Major's discomfort.

"It is clear that Mr. Mayhew tells lies. It is clear that Mr. Major tells lies. I don't need to produce evidence of that, you have it," Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams told the BBC.

At issue will be not so much the morality of contacts with

the IRA but whether Mr. Major and Sir Patrick misled parliament. There is no doubt that outside parliament Sir Patrick and spokesmen for Mr. Major had denied "contacts" with the IRA.

But to mislead parliament is a more serious matter which in the past has led to ministerial resignations — among the most celebrated that of War Minister John Profumo in 1963.

Government officials said they believed Mr. Major and Sir Patrick had chosen their words carefully.

The crisis over Northern Ireland has engulfed Mr. Major just when he was working on a joint programme for peace with Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds.

British officials said it was still possible Mr. Major and Mr. Reynolds could hold an Anglo-Irish summit on Dec. 3, although there remained difficulties drafting a communiqué.

The two men have said they see the best chance for peace in years in the province, spurred on by a spate of sectarian killings in October on both sides of the Protestant-Catholic divide.

Swazi ministry turns away women in trousers

MBABANE (R) — Swaziland's Foreign Ministry is turning away trousers-wearing women, saying that they must change into skirts if they want officials to attend to them. The ministry's principal secretary Philemon Dlamini confirmed Monday that receptionists were enforcing a trouser ban but declined to give reasons.

French firemen cook up world's longest sausage

VALENCE, France (AFP) — Firemen in the southeast French town of Saint-Jude-Claix cooked up a treat Sunday by making the world's longest blood sausage to raise funds to finish building their fire station. At 596.3 metres (1,969 feet) long, the firemen beat the previous world record of 587.4 metres (1,938 feet) set by a Belgian-made sausage. They used some 600 litres (1,260 pints) of blood from abattoirs across the area, and cooked and sold the whole sausage in two hours at 35 francs (\$6) a metre.

UAE zoo gets 7 bears from Holland

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Holland has given seven bears to Dubai Zoo in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the official Emirates News Agency (WAM) reported. The bears from Amsterdam Zoo, weighing more than three tonnes in total, were transported the same day from Frankfurt aboard Emirates Airlines. Dubai has the second largest zoo in the Gulf after Al-Ain, also in the UAE.

Moon-watchers gaze at lunar eclipse

NEW YORK (AP) — Earth's shadow draped slowly across the moon early Monday to the delight of moon-watchers gazing at the continent's most widely visible lunar eclipse in 11 years. "It's spectacular, it's wild. It's beautiful. Especially the setting — on a clear night against the tall buildings," said Tom Proffitt of Cincinnati as he watched the moon disappear above Rockefeller Plaza in New York City just before 12:30 a.m. EST (0530 GMT). "I thought it was a light on top of a skyscraper, it was so clearly defined," said Christopher Paduano of Stamford, Connecticut. "And to see it change so fast." The moon also shone brilliantly across the south, southwest and central midwest in clear, sometimes cold, skies before it was covered by a shadow with a red to copper finish. Clouds eclipsed the eclipse in Chicago, Milwaukee, Minneapolis and Salt Lake City. Los Angeles had a view, but the sky was overcast elsewhere along much of the west coast, disappointing viewers in San Francisco and Seattle. The moon began entering the earth's shadow at 10:27 p.m. EST Sunday (0327 GMT Monday), and was totally eclipsed from 1:02 a.m. EST (0602 GMT) until 1:50 a.m. EST (0650 GMT) Monday. In Los Angeles, more than 1,500 eclipse watchers gathered at Griffith Park Observatory to strains of "blue moon" and other appropriate tunes. "Through a telescope, there is a very definite red in the deepest shadow of the eclipse," said astronomer John Mosely. "On the outside part it is a bluish, pearly white. Subtle but beautiful."

Police uncover hot mezuzahs packed with porn

TEL AVIV (AP) — The religious writings were hot, but the reading material was hotter. Two men who allegedly posed as rabbis to peddle stolen mezuzahs in Israel's north were exposed when police found the traditional Jewish doorpost blessings in their car — packed together with pornography. A mezuzah is a blessing from the Biblical Book of Deuteronomy inscribed onto a parchment scroll, rolled inside a decorative casing and placed on a doorpost. It is required at the entrance to each room in religious households. Police knew they had their men when they opened their briefcases. "There were dozens of mezuzahs on one side of the briefcase and hardcore porn magazines on the other," said Superintendent Yehuda Cohen, police chief in the northern town of Safed. Police tracked the two down after several Safed residents complained they had been deceived by two rabbis who ran mezuzah checks on their homes, Mr. Cohen said.

Greece upsets EC with attack over Macedonia

BRUSSELS (R) — Greece has upset its EC partners with public attacks over links with Macedonia and diplomats said Monday the row could deal a serious blow to the 12-nation bloc's attempts to broker peace in former Yugoslavia.

Just weeks before Athens takes over the European Community (EC) presidency for six months, Greece has stunned its partners by accusing them of plotting secretly to establish diplomatic relations with the former Yugoslav republic.

EC diplomats deny any such intention but said the Greek attacks had confirmed worries among European partners about the country's new Socialist government, in place since October.

The return to power of veteran Socialist leader Andreas Papandreu, who rallied against NATO and the Community when he was last in power during the 1980s, had raised fears in Brussels that Athens would take a hardline stance on sensitive issues.

"This has just confirmed our worst fears," said one diplomat, who asked not to be identified. "By making these kind of attacks in public and with such strong language, Athens makes it very difficult to find solutions."

Greece's minister in charge of EC relations, Theodore Pangalos, Sunday accused Community partners of plotting. Last week, he angered Bonn by saying Germany was "a giant with a bestial force and a child's brain."

Athens has campaigned against international recognition of Macedonia, charging that the Balkan nation's use of the name implied territorial ambitions against Greece's own northern province of Macedonia.

EC attempts to broker peace in former Yugoslavia are currently at a highly sensitive stage.

Foreign ministers of the European Union — as the EC is now known when taking joint action on foreign policy under the terms of the Maastricht Treaty — were meeting in Geneva Monday with the warring parties.

Their aim is to win guarantees for the safe passage of humanitarian aid this winter in Bosnia and nudge the Serbs, Croats and Muslims closer towards an end to the war.

But diplomats in Brussels said Yugoslav leaders such as Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic would be able to exploit EC differences over issues such as Macedonia to their advantage.

"This could be a serious blow to our efforts. We cannot afford to lose unity and credibility," said one diplomat.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Top mafia bosses go on trial in Italy

PALERMO (R) — Fifteen of the mafia's biggest nannies, including alleged boss of bosses Salvatore "Totò" Riina, went on trial Monday in a hearing many legal observers see as a showdown between the Italian state and Cosa Nostra. The outcome could determine whether the mafia reasserts itself after the setbacks of the past year or whether its days are numbered as a violent, archaic fraternity protected by a corrupt state, they say. "This will be the night of the long knives," commented L'Unità newspaper. The heavily-fortified courtroom in Palermo's Ucciardone Prison, whose rows of cages have held some of the world's most dangerous defendants, was packed for opening statements. But although the atmosphere resembled that of a mass trial of suspected Mafia bosses in 1986 — for which the court was built — only Riina and three other defendants chose to be present. Others, like Michele Greco, named by informants as the former head of the mafia's Cupola or inner circle of top bosses, exercised their right to stay away.

Shevardnadze wants election soon

TBILISI (R) — Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze said Monday hardline conservatives in parliament were trying to block the Transcaucasian republic's progress towards democracy and indicated he would seek early elections. "There is a group of reactionary deputies in the parliament, who are interested in destabilising the political situation in this country and blocking the creation of a democratic state in Georgia," Mr. Shevardnadze said in a radio address. "The time is ripe for fresh parliamentary elections, which would show a genuine balance of the political forces in the country," he added. Mr. Shevardnadze, a former Soviet foreign minister, was called to rule Georgia last year after the nationalist President Zviad Gamsakhurdia was ousted in a military revolt. He moved to consolidate his powers in September, when amid a wave of economic turmoil, a rebellion by Mr. Gamsakhurdia's supporters and a separatist minority in Abkhazia, he introduced a state of emergency throughout Georgia. Mr. Shevardnadze said in Monday's radio address his own party, the Georgian Citizens' Union, had good chances in parliamentary elections, should they be called and it could become the leading political force in the country.

Angolan peace talks enter final lap

LUSAKA (R) — Talks to end Angola's civil war entered a crucial stage Monday with negotiators trying to integrate rebel and government armies and wrap up discussions by week's end. "They are on the final lap home and everything succeeds or fails this week," a diplomatic source told Reuters. The sources said negotiators, now in their third week of talks, had virtually closed debate on a ceasefire to end the world's bloodiest war, killing more than 1,000 people a day. But they said U.N. envoy Alioune Blondin Beye, who has imposed a news blackout on the talks, has not announced when the truce would take effect. The negotiators from Angola's government and its UNITA rebel foes made no comment as they silently entered Lusaka's Mulungushi Conference Centre, venue of the meeting, shortly after 10 a.m. (0800 GMT). Diplomatic sources monitoring the slow-moving talks in Zambia's capital Lusaka said Mr. Beye wanted the meeting to end this week.

Honduras opposition heads for victory

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (R) — Opposition Liberal Party candidate Carlos Roberto Reina appeared headed for victory Monday as returns showed him building a big lead in Honduras' national elections. According to the National Elections Tribunal, Mr. Reina led ruling National Party candidate Oswald Ramos 54.1 per cent to 42.03 per cent with 617,775 votes — about one-third of the total ballots cast Sunday — counted. "We have won the battle," Mr. Reina told reporters in the Honduran capital. Mr. Ramos had not officially conceded, but incumbent President Rafael Callejas said that it looked like his National Party was headed for defeat. "Today the people have given their verdict and they have given it in favour of Carlos Roberto Reina," he said in a press conference. "Congratulations to the Liberal Party and to (the) president-elect," Mr. Callejas said.

37 killed in Indian truck crash

NEW DELHI (R) — At least 37 Hindu pilgrims were killed and more than 30 injured when a truck in which they were travelling plunged off a bridge in western India, domestic news agencies said Monday. The crash Sunday night near Khopoli, about 70 kilometres east of Bombay, killed 25 people on the spot, the agencies said. Twelve died later in hospital. The worshippers were on their way home from a pilgrimage to a temple near Pune.

Hindu party fails in Indian state polls

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's main Hindu party conceded Monday that it had lost control of the legislature of India's most populous state in a serious setback to its ambitions of emerging as a national alternative.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) announced that it would sit in the opposition in Uttar Pradesh after failing to win a majority in the 425-member state legislature. A two-party combine led by the Socialist Party was narrowly ahead of the Hindu revivalists and staked its claim to govern Uttar Pradesh, a sprawling northern state of 140 million, with help from friendly parties.

The loss of Uttar Pradesh, where Hindu extremists razed the Babri Mosque in December, was the biggest for the party in this month's staggered state elections. The BJP had vowed to surpass its 1991 tally of 221 seats.

"We have lost arithmetically," BJP spokesman M. Venkiah Naidu said here, as trends indicated a hung legislature in the state. "So we have decided to sit in the opposition."

The BJP trounced Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's Congress (I) Party in New Delhi.

Hong Kong parties back Patten on mini reform bill

HONG KONG (R) — Hong Kong's leading political parties gave their backing Monday for Governor Chris Patten to push ahead with a partial democracy bill, setting the stage for a new rift with Beijing.

Pro-business conservatives and pro-democracy liberals both said they would support Mr. Patten if he introduced part of his democratic reform bill in the colonial legislature after seven months of fruitless Sino-British negotiations.

China and Britain failed last week to agree even on supposedly less contentious issues at make-or-break talks.

Speculation is rife that Mr. Patten will now present a bill based on the "simple issues," such as lowering the voting age, and leave the door open for further talks on key parts of his plan to widen democracy before the colony returns to China in 1997.

The pro-business Liberal Party, and pro-democracy groups the United Democrats and Meeting Point, which account for 32 members in the 60-seat legislature, said with varying degrees of enthusiasm

that they would back such a move.

Government officials say that Mr. Patten has not yet made up his mind what to do after the 17th round of talks in Beijing, which he described as sad and disappointing. But one British source said a partial bill was one possible option.

Apart from cutting the voting age to 18 from 21, the British interpretation of the simple issues is allowing each geographical constituency to elect one legislator, rather than two at present, and the scrapping of a system of government-appointed local councillors.

"We've got absolutely no problems with 18 and indeed the voting age in China is 18," said Ronald Arculli, vice chairman of the Liberal Party.

Mr. Arculli also noted that the legislature had already approved single-seat constituencies. "We've already had that debate so I think it will go through the Legislative Council quite quickly and we would support it as well."

The United Democrats, who have long suspected Mr. Pat-

ten will eventually cave in to Chinese pressure, was less enthusiastic about a partial bill.

"I would urge the administration to table (introduce) the original bill of the governor's package as soon as possible for legislation," Vice Chairman Yeung Sum told RTHK Radio.

Mr. Patten's original bill, published last March but never introduced, effectively allows Hong Kong people to elect directly or indirectly the majority of their legislature in 1995.

But Mr. Yeung nevertheless said his party would support a partial bill with reservations. "If the bill was split we would still vote yes to it. But we would criticise the administration," he said. "Why not table the whole package? (Not doing so) would delay the whole process of legislation."

Even introducing a partial bill may provoke a Chinese walkout of the talks, which began last April amid high hopes of a deal. Hong Kong would then face a rocky run-up to the handover.

Mr. Patten is due to discuss strategy with his colonial

cabinet. The Executive Council, Tuesday and is expected to reveal his plans to legislators Thursday.

Hong Kong is considering a special unit to organise 1994 and 1995 elections, following the failure by Britain and China to agree on a format for the polls, government sources said Monday.

Preparing for elections is a task normally handled by the City and New Territories Administration, which carries out a host of government policies at the grassroots level.

But one government source said: "There's so much work to be done that it would be too much of a burden on the existing department."

No such electoral office is envisioned in the 1984 Sino-British treaty on returning Hong Kong to China in 1997, or in the Basic Law, China's mini-constitution for the territory after the takeover.

Sino-British talks on arrangements for 1994 district board and 1995 legislative elections broke off in Beijing Saturday with no date set for a further round.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mubarak approves 11 death sentences

CAIRO (AP) — President Hosni Mubarak Monday approved death sentences for 11 extremists convicted by military courts for belonging to illegal groups trying to overthrow the government. Twenty militants have already been hanged this year for using violence to topple Mr. Mubarak's secular regime and replace it with Islamic rule. Nineteen others, including the 11, are still on death row. Sentence in military courts have to be approved by the president, after which defendants have 14 days to appeal for presidential clemency.

Russia, Kuwait sign defence accord

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia and Kuwait signed a bilateral defence agreement here Monday as a Kuwaiti delegation began a visit to Russia focusing on prospects for bilateral military cooperation. ITAR-TASS news agency said. The accord signed by Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev and his Kuwaiti counterpart, Ali Al Sabah Al Salem Al Sabah, ITAR-TASS said, giving no further details.

PLO's secret negotiator writes memoirs

TUNIS (R) — The negotiator who steered the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) secret talks with Israel to a successful conclusion and signed the Palestinian self-rule deal in September is writing his memoirs. Palestinian sources said on Monday. Mahmoud Abbas is writing a book which will include details and comments on the secret talks between Palestinians and Israelis in Norway in 1993. The book, being written in Arabic, was expected to be published within two to three months, the sources said.

Five Israeli-backed militiamen flee

MARIJAYOUN (AFP) — Five members of Israel's proxy militia, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), quit the militia earlier this month to avoid being accused of treason if Israel signs a peace deal with Lebanon. SLA chief Antoine Lahd said. Speaking to AFP at the weekend from his fortified home inside Israel's self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon, General Lahd denied reports of any large-scale defections from the ranks of the 3,000-strong SLA. Lebanese security sources reported that Hizbollah captured 12 SLA militants during a major offensive on occupied South Lebanon on Nov. 16. However, reports from Beirut said the men had defected.

Iran to open ferry service to Kuwait

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran is to open a ferry service to take passengers from the southwestern city of Khorramshahr to Kuwait, a shipping official quoted by the Iranian news agency IRNA said Monday. A ship bought from Australia will begin ferrying passengers in late December, managing director of the Iranian shipping company Mahmoud Farhang-Tarjoman said. It can carry 240 passengers and sail at a speed of 30 knots. Iran has already opened two shipping services to ferry passengers and cargo to the United Arab Emirates from the southern ports of Bandar Lengeh and Bandar Abbas.

Turkish police hunt missing uranium

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish police are hunting 5.5 kilograms of missing uranium, which may have been stolen from Chernobyl nuclear power station, police said Monday. It is part of a 10 kilogramme batch of the radioactive material, the remainder of which was recovered Thursday in Bursa, western Turkey, in an undercover operation. Three Georgians were slightly wounded when they were arrested after trying to sell the uranium to disguised police officers. Their identities were still not revealed Monday by police. Parts of the Chernobyl nuclear power station in Ukraine are still in operation despite a massive explosion in one of its reactors in April 1986.

U.N. envoy urges Afghan peace

KABUL (AFP) — Sotirios Mousouris, U.N. coordinator for humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan, wrapped up his two-day visit to Kabul Monday with a warning that U.N. assistance depended on improved security in the country. "The purpose of my visit was to make a strong appeal to stop the fighting," Mr. Mousouris told journalists. He said that the United Nations, which had 200 tonnes of wheat looted by a faction commander recently, would not resume its convoys to Kabul until the current fighting ceased.

German arrested on EC spying charges

BONN (R) — German authorities Monday arrested a 42-year-old Brussels-based civil servant on suspicion of passing European Community (EC) documents to East Germany from 1985 to 1989. The German federal prosecutor's office said in a statement that the suspect, a German national named only as Cornelia N., had been detained on Saturday. She worked in the technical division of the European Commission, the EC's executive body, and was suspected of passing information she came across in her work to the science and technology section of East Germany's intelligence service. Since German unity in 1990, investigators have uncovered dozens of moles who infiltrated not only all sections of German society but also international institutions.

Parliament backs moves

(Continued from page 1)

the Speech from the Throne.

The two Houses emphasised their continued support and backing for the King's policies on the domestic and external fronts and his efforts to attain a just and durable peace.

The two Houses voiced their support for Jordan's principled stands with regard to the restoration of Arab rights and an Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab lands, including Holy Jerusalem.

The replies, delivered by Senate Speaker Ahmad Lawzi and Lower House Speaker Taher Al Masri, stressed that the two Houses would pursue their drive to enhance the march of freedom, democracy, human rights and political pluralism in a manner that would promote the Jordanian people's role in the decision-making process and in a manner that would protect national unity and provide security and stability for the people.

The two Houses voiced appreciation of King Hussein's assessment of the coming stage, which they said would witness very serious developments requiring further caution and vigilance and stronger national unity.

They vowed support for the King's endeavours to boost the capabilities of the Jordanian

Armed Forces and security services, which they said remain the fortress of the nation and a source of pride for the nation for their role in ensuring security and stability for the homeland.

They also supported these forces' role in the U.N. peace keeping and humanitarian efforts.

The Houses pledge that Parliament would translate the confidence granted them by the voters into national stands designed to protect public interest and rights, and corroborate democracy.

The two Houses lauded King Hussein's call for the improvement of inter-Arab relations and achieving Arab solidarity, pledging that they would do their best to cooperate and consult with the government within the framework of the Constitution with the purpose of boosting national development.

The two Houses said they would direct attention towards providing economic and social services to the less-developed districts of the country and sought a more feasible socio-economic formula be worked out by the government to achieve this goal in an objective manner.

They also called for the appointment of qualified and skilled manpower to handle public administration affairs.

Mediators step up bid to free American diplomat

SANAA (Agencies) — Mediators stepped up efforts Monday to secure the release of U.S. diplomat Haynes Mahoney, held hostage since last week by a Yemeni tribe in a remote mountainous region east of the capital.

A diplomat at the U.S. embassy in Sanaa spoke of new mediation by Yemeni tribal chiefs but added it was too soon to say Mr. Mahoney was about to be freed.

"We have no indication that he will be released soon, but we hope so. We heard about some changes in the mediators," the official told AFP, asking not to be identified.

Mohammad Ali Abu Luhom, a member of Parliament from the Jihm region where the hostage is being held, said he was joining the mediators.

Mediators have been trying since Friday to convince Sheikh Mubarak Al Hashan, chief of the tribe allegedly holding the head of the U.S. Information Service in Yemen, to set him free.

Parliamentary Speaker Sheikh Abdullah Al Ahmar, chief of the powerful Hashed tribe, is also working to secure Mr. Mahoney's release.

The U.S. diplomat was kidnapped on Thursday by five armed tribesmen as he drove through Sanaa. The assailants made off with his hostage to Jihm, 70 kilometres away, which has since been surrounded by security forces.

On Sunday, a source close to the government said the chief kidnapper had dropped his demand for oil royalties in exchange of Mr. Mahoney's freedom. But the Sheikh wanted a guarantee that he would not be prosecuted.

The source said the Yemeni government had rejected the offer and was determined to make him pay for his act.

Sheikh Masthan had originally demanded payment of royalties from the government and the U.S. Hunt oil company for installing a pumping station on his tribe's land.

Mr. Mahoney has been sending a stream of handwritten notes saying his kidnappers are treating him well, a colleague said.

"He sent three more letters yesterday afternoon (Sunday)," said Rick Roberts, the USIS chief in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, who flew to Sanaa after Mr. Mahoney was abducted.

"The letters basically say that he's well looked after, and one of them is dictated by the kidnappers, letters of reassurance," Roberts told the Associated Press.



SLAIN COMRADE: Supporters carry the body of Ahmad Abu Rish during his funeral procession in Khan Yunis Monday. Fateh released a statement mobilising all fighters and declaring a "resumption of intensive military actions" against Israeli targets (AFP photo)

Aideed demands U.N. quit Somalia; Ethiopia talks open

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — Mohammad Farah Aideed denounced the United Nations anew Monday and demanded it leave peacemaking in Somalia to a neutral body of African countries, international donors and Somalia.

The faction leader also proposed that all Somali political factions meet for talks in Mogadishu, the Somali capital, the first week of January.

General Aideed boycotted the latest U.N. efforts at peace, an international donors conference that started Monday in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa. Somali faction leaders were expected to meet Tuesday and Wednesday on the sidelines.

Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi opened the conference with a blunt warning to Somali factions that the international community is fed up with their inability to work together. If the factions keep fighting "you will all go under, taking Somalia with you down the drain," he said.

But Somalia's chief rivals, Gen. Aideed and Ali Mahdi Mohammad, were not there to hear the advice.

Gen. Aideed previously said he was boycotting the conference because U.N. forces have not freed three top aides and five other supporters. His delegation stayed away from the opening session to further protest the detentions.

Mr. Ali Mahdi's representatives did attend the session. It was unclear why Mr. Ali Mahdi, who controls northern Mogadishu, stayed away.

Gen. Aideed spoke to reporters at his Somali National Alliance (SNA) faction compound in southern Mogadishu, his stronghold. It was his first news conference since the United Nations suspended a warrant for his arrest two weeks ago.

"The Somali National Alliance says UNOSOM (U.N. Operation in Somalia) forces have failed in their mission," Gen. Aideed, who heads the faction, said in the bombed-out Somali capital.

He said United Nations relief workers and peacekeepers should be replaced by "an independent, neutral body," and added: "The donors should give aid to the Somali people themselves."

Gen. Aideed said he had instructed his 25-strong delegation in Addis Ababa to contact all Somali groups to explain his point of view and invite them to his peace conference in the first week of January to try to draw up a Somali solution to the country's problems.

Asked if his move would not undermine the U.N. conference, Gen. Aideed said this was not his aim. But he repeated his view that UNOSOM should be replaced.

"UNOSOM has failed because it has prescribed the medicine before it knows the disease," he said.

He said UNOSOM had divided Somalis by choosing members of new regional and district councils, and by instigating violence among different Somali groups.

UNOSOM had also undermined the Somali economy by giving contracts to foreigners rather than to Somalis, he said.

Gen. Aideed again called for the U.N. to release eight of his closest aides, held on suspicion of organising attacks on U.N. peacekeepers.

U.N. officials have said the Addis Ababa conference is the last chance for peace in the Horn of Africa country, but

the absence of Gen. Aideed and Mr. Ali Mahdi dampened any hope of a breakthrough.

Gen. Aideed, wearing a blue-and-gold shirt, spoke in a flower-decked villa with sheets hiding bullet holes in the walls.

Gen. Aideed repeated his earlier statements that he supports the principle of an independent commission to investigate the deaths of 24 Pakistani U.N. peacekeepers last June. But its members must not be chosen by the U.N., he said.

The United Nations launched a manhunt after the 'Pakistanis were killed but called it off last month after more than 70 peacekeepers had been killed in urban warfare in Mogadishu.

U.S. special envoy to Somalia Robert Oakley said in Addis Ababa he was "not surprised" by the absence of Gen. Aideed or Mr. Ali Mahdi.

"They don't want to commit themselves personally and are waiting to see what happens," Mr. Oakley said, adding that the "situation is still tense" in Mogadishu, with "bargaining still under way."

Three Somalis killed

U.S. troops killed three Somalis carrying weapons in the Somali capital Monday in two separate incidents, a U.S. military spokesman said.

In the first incident the Americans shot dead a Somali seen carrying a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) alongside the 21 October Road in the south of the city, spokesman Steve Rausch said.

U.S. troops later engaged three Somalis who were loading a machine-gun into a car along the Afgoye road, near the Benadir Hospital, killing two and wounding one.

Anniversary of unity agreement no joy to Yemenis

SANAA (R) — Apprehensive Yemenis, on the eve of the fourth anniversary of the agreement uniting North and South Yemen, fear that a four-month-old row between their leaders may split the country in two once again.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his deputy Ali Salem Al Beedh's who ruled the former North and South Yemen respectively, signed an agreement in Aden on Nov. 30, 1989 setting out the merger which took place six months later.

But a row between the two men over political and economic reform appears to be threatening the country's brief spell of unity.

Mr. Saleh's General People's Congress (GPC) and Mr. Beedh's Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) jointly ruled unified Yemen after the merger until elections last April, when the Islamist party Islah joined the government coalition.

Diplomats said the YSP and the GPC agree on the need to preserve Yemen's unity but disagree on the formula.

The Aden-based YSP, fearing domination from the North, was called for devolution of power away from the capital Sanaa, a stronghold of Mr. Saleh's GPC.

It accuses Mr. Saleh and the GPC of turning unification into annexation and of trying to run everything their own way.

YSP's second in command, Saleh Saleh Mohammad, was quoted on Saturday as saying his party "is prepared for federalism as a practical alternative, protecting the rights of all parties and the unity and sovereignty of Yemen."

But representatives of the two other parties in Yemen's coalition government, immediately rejected the idea.

GPC's Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani, a northerner and presidential council member, said federalism was unacceptable to his party.

The leader of the Islah Party, Sheikh Abdullah Ben Hussein Al Ahmar, was quoted on Monday by the GPC's Al Mithaq newspaper as saying "any call for federalism is an expression of a destructive secessionist trend. Any attempt to destabilise unity or use it for bargaining purposes is considered treason."

The remarks by Mr. Mohammad, a southerner representing YSP on the presidential council, led to an indefinite postponement on Sunday of multi-party talks to defuse the political crisis.

The talks were aimed to reconcile the GPC and YSP and come up with a list of reforms and a timetable for implementation.

COLUMN

McCartney: Jackson can't handle fame

Buenos Aires (R) — Former Beatle Paul McCartney suggested in an interview published Sunday that superstar Michael Jackson, who faces child-abuse charges and is under treatment for addiction to painkillers, is unable to cope with fame. "We, the Beatles, were ordinary guys... when fame arrived, we went a bit crazy, but even so we had our feet on the ground we had roots we knew about life," Michael, instead... ah well," McCartney told the Argentine daily Clarin in an interview in Tokyo before the Buenos Aires stage of his new world tour.

McCartney said he regrets Jackson for buying up the rights to the Beatles' songs but said he doubted the pop star was guilty of child abuse. "Linda and I are parents, and it's clear to us that Michael isn't that kind of person," he said. McCartney described Jackson's addiction to painkillers, which forced him to break off his world tour this month, as typical of the U.S. west coast. "It's very L.A. — I mean, Judy Garland, Elizabeth Taylor... these are people who become stars at a very young age," he said. McCartney, whose tickets sales ahead of his Buenos Aires concerts have far outpaced those of recent Madonna and Jackson concerts, said he thought Jackson was not serious when he first indicated he wanted to buy the rights to the Beatles' songs. "We were friends and one day he says, 'I'm going to buy your songs.' I told him, 'oh yeah, great joke,' but he meant it."

"I think handing over our songs for certain advertisements as he actually did, is a mistake. We were offered millions to do it, but we refused because we didn't want to hurt songs which are sacred to people. And we always wanted them to keep being so, which is invalidated when you use that music for sneakers," McCartney said.

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Britons distrust journalists, ministers — poll

LONDON (R) — The British public trusts journalists as little as government ministers to tell the truth, according to a survey published by the Times newspaper Monday. Top of the list of trustworthy professions are doctors and teachers, both on 84 per cent, closely followed by clergymen and priests who have slipped five percentage points to 80 per cent since the last poll in 1983. The Times said the biggest change had been in the public's view of journalists. "The number trusting their veracity has virtually halved since 1983 and now stands at 10 per cent," said the newspaper. Journalists came bottom of the list of 15 professions along with government ministers.

Couple arrested in sex swindle plot

TOKYO (R) — Japanese police have arrested a couple for trying to swindle a 72-year-old man by luring him with the promise of sex with a young girl, police said Monday. The old man met the girl, 19, by calling one of Japan's telephone clubs — agencies where male and female callers make contact by telephone to arrange dates and sex. When the man and the girl checked into a hotel in Hichioji, a Tokyo suburb, a young gangster appeared. "What do you think you're doing with another man's wife you're going to make up for this?" he said and demanded three million yen (\$28,000) as a pay-off. The old man told police, who arrested the gangster when he turned up two weeks later to collect the money.

British attitudes to marriage more liberal — poll

LONDON (R) — British attitudes to sex, marriage and single parenthood have become significantly more liberal during the recent years of Conservative government, according to a survey reported by the Independent newspaper Monday. Attitudes to adultery and pre-marital sex are now markedly more permissive. Half of those polled believed sex before marriage was "not at all wrong" compared with just 42 per cent in 1987. Only 44 per cent thought having sex with someone other than their partner was "always wrong" compared with 59 per cent 10 years ago.

Iranian plane hijacked to Iraq

NICOSIA (AP) — An unidentified Iranian hijacked an Oil Ministry aircraft on a domestic flight in Iran with 38 people aboard Monday, then surrendered hours after it landed in southern Iraq, news reports said.

The Iraq News Agency said the male hijacker surrendered at 3:45 p.m. (1245 GMT), six hours after the twin-prop Fokker Friendship F-27 owned by Iran's oil ministry landed in Basra.

It did not say whether or not the hijacker was armed, or if any of the passengers were hurt in the ordeal. INA also did not say what the hijacker's demands were, except that he requested asylum in Iraq or any other country.

His wife and five children were with him on the flight.

INA said.

The agency said the plane landed in Basra at 9:45 a.m. (0645 GMT) following a request by Iranian authorities. Iran's Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said officials had requested Iraq "not to provide services for the hijacked plane."

Tehran Radio said the plane took off from Gachsaran in central Iran at 7:55 a.m. (0425 GMT) with 35 passengers and three crew members and was headed for Ahvaz in the oil-rich south. Passengers, which included six women and eight children, were apparently families of Oil Ministry personnel.

Kuwait's Interior Ministry said the plane had requested permission to land in Kuwait but was refused, the official

Kuwaiti News Agency reported. It said air force planes were ordered to drive the plane out of Kuwait's airspace.

Basra is inside the "no-fly zone" imposed by the United Nations over southern Iraq. There was no immediate word from allied forces patrolling the zone.

IRNA said a caller claiming to speak from Paris on behalf of the Mujahadeen-e-Khalq, the Iraq-based Iranian opposition group, claimed responsibility for the hijacking.

But a Mujahadeen spokesman, speaking by telephone from Paris, said the group "never takes part in activity such as hijackings which endanger the lives of innocent people and condemn hijackings or endangering the lives of innocent people."

Kurds occupy buildings to protest ban

FRANKFURT (Agencies) — Some 300 Kurdish activists refused on Monday to leave a Kurdish centre in Frankfurt which they had stormed over the weekend in protest at a clampdown by German authorities.

The building was one of many Kurdish centres or offices closed down when Bonn banned the PKK, three weeks after coordinated assaults on Turkish offices in Germany and elsewhere in Western Europe which officials blamed on the group.

The PKK denied involvement in the attacks, in which a Turkish man died when a Wiesbaden restaurant was fire-bombed.

A German police union chief said he feared a wave of terrorist attacks in response to the ban, while in Athens a leader of the PKK's political arm warned that German interests in Kurdistan would be attacked if Bonn continued "its anti-Kurdish crackdown."

In Mannheim, 100 demonstrators have occupied another cultural centre since Sunday.

Kurdish banners crowded at the windows while supporters shouted messages of support outside.

The group objected to the closure of the centre as part of a ban imposed last Friday on the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), which is fighting for an independent Kurdish homeland in southeast Turkey, and 35 affiliated groups.

After occupying the building Sunday, they had threatened to set it on fire if police tried to evict them.

"We are not leaving until the centre is officially allowed to reopen," a spokeswoman for the group said. "We are not criminals and we are not terrorists." She said the centre was an important meeting place for the city's Kurdish community.

Women and children waving